

LITERARY
MISCELLANIES

BY JAMES MASON, Esq.,

VOL. II.

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OBSERVATIONS

ON OUR

PRINCIPAL DRAMATIC AUTHORS.

OF the plays here given to the world, two have been already published. In these I have now made considerable alterations, (thinking it advisable at the same time to change their names for others more appropriate) some of which were necessary on more serious grounds than those of taste. They were enforced by that regard to poetic justice, which is certainly so far a requisite of the drama, and indeed every other species of writing, that if the purpose or the effect of an author is beyond mere amusement, the lesson he conveys should assuredly be a lesson of virtue.

Before however, I endeavour to propitiate the reader to the contents of this volume, it will not perhaps be considered as time mispent to make some remarks upon

the drama as it exists amongst us, particularly with a view of classing under distinct heads the various styles of comedy, which have been exhibited on our stage. This purpose will be best accomplished by taking a brief survey of our principal authors, beginning from the remote age of Shakespeare. Tragedy is in its nature more uniform than comedy, as its object is passion rather than character, nor has the style adapted to it suffered much variation through a succession of ages. We might perhaps with much care and attention divide our tragedies into the sentimental or the pathetic, those remarkable for inspiring sorrow, or those where terror is the principal feeling of the audience, but still there is this grand distinction, that in tragedy the author is subservient to his subject, becoming tender or sublime according to characters and feelings already known and described, while in comedy, so extensive is his choice, the plot and the persons who figure in it, may be said to be equally his own, and he may manage both according to his own experience and fancy —Hence being more at ease in comedy than in tragedy, he marks out a style for himself decisively in the former, while in the latter he is probably a cold imitator,

to be distinguished from his predecessors only by greater or less harmony of versification. The comic author has to do with the ever varying modifications and details of the feelings, as they actuate common men in every day's intercourse ; the tragic author delineates them in the gross, as they are unchangeable, and as they make a durable and certain impression. The infrequency of their occurrence in the latter form only serves to mark them out the more strongly. In tragedy the rule of judging is derived from history, or a comparison with what has been already done, in comedy it is every man's own experience. The tragic and the comic paths terminate in the same point, but the latter branches out into a thousand bye-ways, some of which are seen and known by numbers, others by a few, others only by one, the former is a broad high road, so steep as to require much labour, and so elevated as to be visible to all men. The comic author may be compared to a man living upon his income, which he spends with moderation, but as whim or caprice actuate him ; but the tragic author at once seizes upon the capital and lives for others more than himself. Splendor is his aim, and he can only be distinguished from

those who have the same object in view, by exhibiting a greater or a less degree of it. The more violent and sublime emotions are not very numerous, and the tragic author, if he writes much, must aim at least to delineate all of them; the comic author has a field as wide as the infinite modifications of human character can supply. The tragic author becomes the creature of his employment, the comic author unrestrained pursues the original bent of his disposition. From these observations perhaps may be deduced the reason, why it would be difficult to ascribe any anonymous tragedy to it's author, or even to it's age, always excepting Shakespeare, while it would scarcely be possible to mistake in comedy the style of the times when Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Massinger wrote, or to hesitate whether a certain play was Congreve's, or Steele's, or Foote's. It is chiefly then with a view of recommending a classification of our comedies that the following remarks are offered to the reader. At the same time I shall remember, that in these light pursuits as well as in graver and more weighty studies, there is not a more prolific source of error than the love of system; and I doubt not,

that after a perusal of these pages, many plays will occur, which cannot with propriety be marshalled under any of the heads I shall have proposed.

Of the merit of Shakespeare it is superfluous to speak. His plays in the public estimation still hold their superiority to those of any other writer, nor is it necessary to remind the reader of the judgment of Dryden, that he was prevented by errors of carelessness only from being the first of mankind ; or of the labours of Pope and Johnson, who thought it honor enough to be his editors and commentators.

Johnson observes that Shakespeare's natural disposition led him to comedy. " In tragedy, continues this splendid and powerful critic, he often writes with great appearance of toil and study what is written at last with little felicity ; but in his comic scenes he seems to produce without labour, what no labour can improve. In tragedy he is always struggling after some occasion to be comic ; but in comedy he seems to repose, or to luxuriate, as in a mode of thinking congenial to his nature. In his tragic scenes there is always something wanting ; but his comedy often surpasses expectation or desire. His comedy pleases

by the thoughts, and language, and his tragedy for the greater part by incident and action." However disposed I may be to bow to the authority of a critic whose remarks have frequently the force of intuitive truths, it appears to me that the opinion conveyed in the quotation just made, if not false, is much overcharged and exaggerated. To me Shakespeare is never tedious but in his comedy. In its higher walks indeed he is always excellent and inimitable, but when he surrenders himself without controul to his mirth, his dialogue not seldom runs into a flippant insipidity, equally oppressive from its facility and its emptiness. This remark may be exemplified by his play of "Love's Labour Lost," which perhaps, next to "The Merry Wives of Windsor," is the most regular of his comedies. Whenever the princess with the ladies of her court appears, the dialogue is most admirable, whether we consider the concise elegance with which they draw the characters of their respective lovers, the beauty of the thoughts and allusions, or the mere harmony of the verse. If in some happy valley, tired with dull prose and the common incidents of life, a number of ladies were to exchange the intrigues and dissipation of a court for

tranquillity and peace they would certainly talk in this manner.

Princess. Know you the man?

Maria. I know him, madam: at a marriage feast,
Between lord Perigort and the beauteous heir
Of Jaques Falconbridge, solemnized
In Normandy, saw I this Longaville:
A man of sovereign parts he is esteemed,
Well fitted in the arts, glorious in arms:
Nothing becomes him ill, that he would well:
The only soil of his fair virtue's gloss,
(If virtue's gloss will stain with any soil)
Is a sharp wit, match'd with too blunt a will,
Whose edge hath power to cut, whose will still wills,
It none should spare, that come within his power.

Prin. Some merry mocking lord, belike; is't so?

Mar. They say so most, that most his humours know.
Prin. Such short-liv'd wits do wither as they grow.
Who are the rest?

Katharine. The young Dumain, a well accomplish'd youth,
Of all, that virtue love, for virtue lov'd:
Most power to do most harm, least knowing ill:
For he hath wit to make an ill shape good,
And shape to win grace, though he had no wit.
I saw him at the duke Alençon's once:
And much too little of the good, I saw,
Is the report to his great worthiness.

Rosaline. Another of these students at that time
Was there with him: if I have heard a truth,
Biron they call him: but a merrier man,
Within the limit of becoming mirth,
I never spent an hour's talk withal:
His eye begets occasion for his wit,
For every object, that the one doth catch,
The other turns to a mirth-moving jest,

Which his fair tongue (conceit's expositor)
Delivers in such apt and gracious words
That aged ears play truant at his tales,
And younger hearings are quite ravished:
So sweet and voluble is his discourse.

Prin. God bless my ladies! are they all in love?" &c.

When the King of Navarre and his friends are on the stage, however we may disapprove of their scheme of secession, we recognize at once the manners and language, which most become royalty and most adorn a court. In the midst of so much inimitable excellence, the long conversations of Costard, Moth, Armado, Holofernes, and the inferior persons of the play, are perfectly intolerable. Busy without acuteness, quick without life, the dialogue falls away into a verbal drivel, which would overcome the fame of any author, whose other merits were less firmly established. The same censure may be extended to much of the comedy in the historic play of Henry the IVth. Falstaff, indeed, is always worth hearing. He is an uncommon character, and he never speaks but in a manner appropriate to himself, but the comic parts below him are often weak and tiresome, both in the study and on the stage. "The Merry Wives of Windsor" must be allowed to be exempt from such condemna-

tion, and, perhaps, we must so far submit to the opinion of Johnson as to allow this comedy to be the most perfect of all Shakespeare's productions. The author seems to trust, with the full confidence of his superior powers, to the guidance of his disposition. He plays and wantons without restraint, and yet is never silly, trifling, or unappropriate ; he luxuriates at large, but the produce of his pen never runs into rankness. Still, however, the decision of Johnson seems to me far too general. It is difficult to say to what department of the drama inclined the natural disposition of a man, who has excelled all other men in every department ; but when we observe his portraiture of the more violent passions, of ambition, of jealousy, of revenge, of hate ; of the high-wrought feelings, of paternal disappointment, of filial devotion, of connubial idolatry ; when we mark the astonishing skill with which he works up these master-emotions to the furthest point they can extend to, it is surely impossible not to think that in this more sublime exercise of his genius he was following its natural bent. That he reposes, that he luxuriates in comedy, I would willingly allow, but to call this the original disposition of a man, who is so

equal to the majestic and the impassioned, is to devote Achilles to his boarding school, or Hercules to the employment of the distaff. When Shakespeare fails in tragedy, his defect is generally momentary—pass a line, or perhaps a word, and the violence of the emotion seems to work itself pure, but it would not be difficult to shew pages of his comedy, where a brilliant witticism is so buried in nonsense as to be scarcely perceptible. If in his tragedies he sometimes seizes an occasion to be comic, we must also allow that in his professed comedies he has pathetic passages, as irresistible for their beauty, as surprizing for their place. When we are told that his comedy pleases by its thoughts and language, and his tragedy for the greater part by incident and action, we suspect that by some error of the press there must be a transposition of terms. Falstaff's difficulties and embarrassments would be laughable in any hand; but who could conduct Othello to the murder of his wife, and make him at the moment of doing the infernal deed talk of justice, and yet be heard with patience, who could achieve this with no incident but the stealing of a handkerchief. When the sable hero arraigns the equity of heaven, when he

deems poverty, disease, the captivity of himself and his hopes, and all the afflictions with which our suffering nature can be agonized and broken, as trivial in comparison with his misfortunes, and this under the influence of trifles light as air; how comes it that we do not laugh at him for a madman, how comes it that we still divide our sympathy between him and his wife? Dogberry and Verges are ludicrous from the situation in which they are placed, but it is an air-drawn dagger that leads Macbeth to Duncan, and the bursting heart of Lear is thrown at your feet by the undoing of a clasp. The tragedy of Shakespeare is said to be skill, his comedy to be instinct. It will be more exact justice to say, that his comedy and his tragedy are alike instinct, if by instinct is meant that original independant power, which accomplishes its purposes in defiance of all external wants and difficulties, or rather which grows great by opposition and rises in proportion to its obstacles, completing what all other men think it impossible to begin, executing all it conceives, and perfecting all it invents.

The general characteristics of Shakespeare's comedy are, in the higher sort, thoughts and

allusions truly poetic, characters most happily delineated, occasional displays of the pathetic, which every breast instantly acknowledges, the whole set off by a singular felicity of expression and harmony of versification. His lower comedy may be remarked for an extreme vivacity both of incident and dialogue, a natural overflowing exuberance of wit and fancy, a vigorous appropriation of his speeches to his characters, and that kind of interesting bustle, which arises from many actors being on the stage at once, while at the same time they are all kept perfectly distinct from each other. In his higher comedy he seems to aim at plots of improbability and intricacy, which give him many opportunities, never thrown away, of displaying the brilliant powers of his imagination, and the astonishing versatility and flexibility of his genius. In his lower comedy he chooses the most common situations, and his great delight is to fill them with persons, who from their education and rank in life are totally unfit for them. I allude to Sly in "the Taming of the Shrew," Dogberry and Verges in "Much ado about Nothing," Trinculo and Stephano in "the Tempest," and the like. Certainly if he errs in these delineations, it is not on the side of good-nature. In his

higher comedy he shews us men as they would be in situations which never can arrive; in his lower comedy, we must so far yield to the opinion of Johnson as to confess, that he frequently applies the most common incidents to the most common men. His justice prides himself upon keeping the peace in the midst of a total ignorance of law ; his watchmen think it their duty to sleep rather than to talk; and his clown is never more profuse in his wit, than when he converses with his dog. Shakespeare was born in 1564, and died in 1616—leaving behind him five and thirty plays, which embrace the whole circle of human life, for the amusement, instruction, and melioration of all ages.

“Shakespeare,” says Johnson, “was the first considerable author of sublime and familiar dialogue in our language.” Under his invigorating influence, the age that saw the infancy of this mode of writing, was also witness of its maturity. This he himself exemplified, and he was surrounded by authors, some of whom approached him in merit. It seldom happens indeed that a man singularly eminent for any art or accomplishment, stands alone. The mighty tree of the forest throws out its suckers,

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Ben Jonson was of this age. It has been remarked with truth, that there is no author of real and indisputable merit, to whom the world have been less indulgent. It is not, it seems, in human nature to pardon the ungrateful satyr of Shakespeare. The justice of the imputation has been denied, but the public indignation attending it seems to remain. Jonson has some of the excellencies, however attenuated, of his great contemporary, whose spontaneous effusions he laboriously, and not ineffectually imitates. He surpasses him in the greater regularity of his plots. His *Alchymist*, indeed, describes only the manners and follies of his day, but his plays of “*Every Man in his Humour*,” “*The Fox*,” and “*The Silent Woman*,” delineate universal characters, and with a force and fidelity, which bring them home to every man’s bosom. He has occasionally, also, much happiness in his expression, and considerable harmony in his versification. There is, however, one of his plays, entitled “*The Devil is an Ass*,” in which the plot appears more awkward and ill-contrived than any I remember. It opens with a dialogue between Satan, Pug,

and Iniquity, in which the minor devil, Pug, asks leave to go on earth, but is suspected by his master of not being equal to the times. He gets permission, and the intention is to show that “ he is an ass” for affecting to increase vices, which are greater already than he could ever imagine. Jonson’s province is not humour, and the play is a most heavy and intricate production. This author is spoken of by Milton for his learning.

Then to the well trod stage anon,
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one only person, till Susario invented a second; after him, Epicharmus a third, Phormus and Chionides devised to have four actors, with a prologue and chorus; to which Cratinus (long after) added a fifth and sixth; Eupolis, more: Aristophanes, more than they: every man in the dignity of his spirit and judgment, supplied something. And (though that in him, this kind of poem appeared absolute and fully perfected) yet how is the face of it changed since, in Menander, Philemon, Cecilius, Plautus, and the rest? who have utterly excluded the chorus, altered the property of the persons, their names and natures, and augmented it with all liberty, according to the elegancy and disposition of those times wherein they wrote." I am not sufficient scholar to know if all this is accurate, but it shews that the author had a very elevated idea of the uses to which the stage might be put. In the play of the " New Inn," we have the following very brilliant passage.

Did you ever know or hear of the Lord Beaufort,
Who served so bravely in France ? I was his page,
And, ere he died, his friend: I follow'd him,
First, i' the wars, or i' the times of peace,
I waited on his studies, which were right.

He had no Arthurs, nor no Rosicleers,
 No knights o' the sun, nor Amadis de Gauls,
 Primalions, Pantagruels, public nothings ;
 Abortives of the fabulous dark cloyster,
 Sent out to poison courts, and infest manners :
 But great Achilles, Agamemnon's acts,
 Sage Nestor's counsels, and Ulysses' slights,
 Tydides' fortitude, as Homer wrought them
 In his immortal phant'sie, for examples
 Of the heroic virtue. Or, as Virgil,
 That master of the epic poem, limn'd
 Pious Æneas his religious prince,
 Bearing his aged parent on his shoulders,
 Rapt from the flames of Troy, with his young son :
 And these he brought to practice and to use.
 He gave me first my breeding, I acknowledge,
 Then shov'r'd his bounties on me, like the hours,
 That open-handed sit upon the clouds,
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Such passages are very frequent. It is unnecessary to separate him from Shakespeare more distinctly, than by adding the well-known lines of Milton, immediately following those already quoted,

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incur from carelessness—he describes too much, and disdains those judicious concealments which decency prescribes in order to prevent disgust. Ben Jonson died in 1637, aged 63.

Beaumont and Fletcher also belong to this period. They have been justly described as holding a middle station between Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, being as much below the former in merit as they are superior to the latter. The censure I have applied to Jonson may be pronounced on them with at least equal justice. They have, however, occasionally beauties of the opposite nature, which were scarcely ever surpassed. One of these, from the conversation between Constantia and Frederic, in "The Chances," ought to be remembered.

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Shall truly here attend you : No rude tongue
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Join'd to my vow'd obedience, shall protect you,
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To render with my thanks, this worthless trifle :
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Are still their own rewards : Heav'n bless me, lady,
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But to their mulcts and frailties a mere stranger.

which frequently pushes them into a painful and unnatural smartness of repartee, though at the same time we must confess, that extending through the whole play, it gives a more finished regularity to the plot, than is generally to be found in the productions of our more favored and admired dramatist. Their incidents are too bold and forced, as the marriage of Welford and Martha in "The Scornful Lady;" Don John receiving the child in "The Chances;" the attack of Zenobia upon Count Clodio; or the still more preposterous one of Hippolita upon Arnoldo, in "The Custom of the Country;" the adventure between Lamira, Claremont, and Dinant, in the third act of "The little French Lawyer." Their plots are sometimes so intricate as to require all our attention for the mere purpose of development. The most glaring instance of this fault is perhaps exhibited by Shakespeare in his "Comedy of Errors." You are in a continual maze, and if you remit your exertions for a moment, in order to admire the occasional beauties of the dialogue, you are in danger of being irrecoverably lost. This irritating fault is perpetuated by many of our modern authors, who seem to think there is ingenuity in confusion, and at the

same time offer us no compensation for the perplexity in which they involve us. Beaumont and Fletcher afford an instance of it in the general plot of "The Chances," "The Custom of the Country," "Rule a Wife and have a Wife," and other plays. The dialogue of these authors, though for the most part appropriate, is sometimes singularly the reverse. What shall we say to the following noble and magnificent line being put into the mouth of a young lady defending the character of her lover.

Virtue is never wounded, but I suffer.

(*Custom of the Country*, Act 1.)

Had such a line found place in Mr. Addison's *Cato*, it would have been granted to a man, whom conscious merit had elevated to the idea that he was the peculiar favorite of heaven. The learning of these authors is frequently obtrusive and unnatural. Their young ladies prefer a "happiness in esse" to a "happiness in posse;" their servants draw their illustrations from the waters of Nonacris in Arcadia, and their waiting maids talk of Bellarmine. Enough has been said to mark out a wide distinction between them and Shakespeare. It must also be observed that their characters

are usually of a higher cast, being mostly of the rank of gentlemen, while Shakespeare generally contents himself with exercising his comic talents on drunken sailors, clowns, constables, and watchmen. "They understood," says Dryden, "and imitated the conversation of gentlemen much better, whose wild debaucheries and quickness of wit in repartees, no poet can ever paint as they have done." This panegyric may sufficiently account for the preference given to their plays above all others in the reign of Charles II. when the courtiers vied with each other in adopting them to representation; and we may suppose, that in the hands of Buckingham and Rochester, there would be at least one class of faults undiminished either in frequency or extent. We must also remember that the task they had to perform was less difficult than that of Shakespeare. In his plays each individual is a distinct character, "the representation of a species," and there is scarcely a speech which could be transferred from one person to another; but in the general dialogue of the gentlemen who figure in the plots of Beaumont and Fletcher, the style is the same on all sides, and a sentence that becomes Rutilio, is equally suited

to the lips of Arnoldo. It is impossible, however, to dismiss the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, without acknowledging the high degree of amusement and instruction they afford—without feeling that they are crowded with every species of excellence—with moral wisdom inforced by much poetical beauty and singular felicity of expression—with exhibition of character faithful to the feelings of mankind, and as various and extended as those feelings. If their vigour sometimes runs into licentiousness, it generally displays itself in the exuberant glow of genius, giving a higher colour to nature in order to impress her works the more upon our minds. Beaumont died in 1615. Fletcher in 1625.

Massinger, whose unmerited poverty and distress, during his life, have been exchanged by posterity for a neglect equally unjust, or a notice more cruel than any neglect in the presumptuous ignorance of his editors, shall close my enumeration of the writers of this early age. His fame has at length been amply vindicated by the literary and moral anger of Mr. Gifford, and I have to name him chiefly in justice to my subject. He is a writer of various and extraordinary merit. In his lower

comedy, indeed, he is often unsuccessful. The comic scenes, for instance, where Spungius and Hircius appear in the horrible but magnificent tragedy of “the Virgin Martyr,” are, for the most part, vulgar without merriment, gross without passion, smart without wit, and laborious without effect. The same persons are sometimes on the contrary ridiculously learned. A fault of this latter description may also be found in the powerful play of “the New Way to Pay Old Debts,” as where the cook talks of raising,

Fortifications in the pastry,
Such as might serve for models in the low countries,
Which if they had been practised at Breda,
Spinola might have thrown his cap at it and ne'er took it.

A third instance may be adduced from “the very woman,” where “the prodigal author” puts the following description of Almira’s despair on the occasion of her lover Martino having received a dangerous wound from Antonio, into the mouth of a waiting woman.

Wom. I am sure she slept not. If she slumber’d, straight,
As if some dreadful vision had appear’d,
She started up, her hair unbound, and, with
Distracted looks staring about the chamber,
She asks aloud—where is Martino? where

Have you conceal'd him ? sometimes names Antonio,
 Trembling in ev'ry joint, her brows contracted,
 Her fair face as 'twere chang'd into a curse,
 Her hands held up thus ; and, as if her words
 Were too big to find passage through her mouth,
 She groans, then throws herself upon her bed,
 Beating her breast."

This splendid harmonious eloquence of one chambermaid is succeeded by the equally preposterous learning of a second.

2d. Wom. Nay more :

She that of late vouchsaf'd not to be seen,
 But so adorn'd as if she were to rival
 Nero's Poppæa, or the Egyptian queen,
 Now careless of her beauties, when we offer
 Our service, she contemns it.

Of such inappropriateness of dialogue, whether from elevation or depression, the first of which is so flattering to the pride, the latter so consonant to the frailty of an author, Shakespeare is never guilty. Massinger, as was before observed, fails in his lower comedy. Mr. Gifford himself, indeed, allows that he has no pretensions to wit, but maintains his claim to a considerable portion of humour. He should have defined his idea of humour and given us some examples of it, as nothing is so vague as these general observations. Perhaps he

had in view a scene in “the Virgin Martyr,” where an evil spirit, disguised as Harpax, persuades Hircius and Spungius, that the devil is a better fellow than they imagine.

Harp. How! the devil? I'll tell you what now of the devil,
He's no such horrid creature; cloven-footed,
Black, saucer-eyed, his nostrils breathing fire,
As these lying Christians make him.

Both. No!

Harp. He's more loving
To man, than man to man is.

Hir. Is he so? would we two might come acquainted
with him.

Harp. You shall: he's a wondrous good fellow, loves
a cup of wine, a whore, any thing; if you have money,
it's ten to one but I'll bring him to some tavern to you or
other.

Spun. I'll bespeak the best room in the house for him.

Har. Some people he cannot endure.

Hir. We'll give him no such cause.

Harp. He hates a civil lawyer as a soldier does peace.

[See vol. I. page 73.]

In his higher comedy, Massinger is admirable, abounding every where in strength, feeling, poetry, character, and precepts of wisdom. It is difficult to quote where almost equal excellence is universal, and unnecessary, as his works are now published in so desirable a form. Mr. Gifford is indignant with Mr. M. Mason, for *inclining*

to make a partial exception in favor of Shakespeare, on the point of harmony of numbers, an excellence in which, according to the former of these gentlemen, Massinger stands unrivalled. This is the over-heated zeal of an editor. At least, I cannot imagine that the harmony of Massinger, easy, flowing, and attractive as it is, can be preferred by a deliberate judgment to the wild, natural, ever-appropriate music of Shakespeare, which, though too frequently interrupted and sometimes even turned into dissonance, (faults, indeed, of which Massinger is guilty to an equal extent,) often surpasses imitation or praise, and arrives at that degree of excellence, which, if we may apply to poetry a phrase, originating in the sister arts of painting and sculpture, may be termed the ideal perfection. Massinger has the defects, as well as the merits of his age, in the occasional grossness and indelicacy of his dialogue, his exaggerated delineation of character, the rapidity, boldness, I had almost said, the ferocity of his incidents. The play of "the City Madam," which Mr. Gifford seems to think the best of his comedies, exhibits this latter fault in a most flagrant excess. After many circumstances suffi-

ciently strong and energetic, the fifth act commences with an uncle agreeing to send his brother's wife and his two nieces to Virginia, for the express purpose of being sacrificed to the devil. This play, notwithstanding, is crowded with the most eminent beauties of every description. In the general management of his plots, Massinger appears to me to surpass his great contemporaries, not excepting Jonson, who comes next him in this respect. Massinger was born in 1584 and died in 1640.

It will not be superfluous here to observe, that what is called the management of the plot has generally held too high a consideration in dramatic composition. Indeed, a play is frequently injured nearly in proportion to the value that is set and the industry that is bestowed on this point. Carelessness should unquestionably be avoided, but an author, who trusts much for success to this sort of dexterity, has seldom much time for attending to the beauties of dialogue, or the display of character, and he puts his audience into the same predicament. Lord Holland, in his very amusing account of the life and writings of the great Spanish dramatist Lope de Vega Carpio, bestows too high a pane-

gyric upon his author for his skill in contriving and managing his plots. It must be added that the play, sketched as a proof of the justice of this praise, even considered according to the intention with which it is given, is far too violent in its transitions. At least, I cannot agree with the noble critic in his admiration of the scene, where a lady at her toilette, preparing with great exultation of heart for her marriage, is suddenly interrupted by persons bringing before her the corpse of her brother, who has been murdered, at the request of the king, by his dearest friend her lover.

There were other authors of considerable dramatic excellence at the period of which I have been treating, such as Rowley, Middleton, Field, Decker, Shirley, and Ford. Enough, however, has been said to distinguish the style of the age, (which I take from the birth of Shakespeare to the death of Massinger) and though it may be rash to follow the various editors and commentators of our ancient dramatists to the full extent of their panegyricks, all men, undoubtedly, who delight more in striking passages than in a finished whole, who above all things dislike a laborious mediocrity, who love to estimate the capacity as well as the works of an

author, and measure him by what he could do as well as by what he does, who value power above exertion, and can pardon all errors but those of imbecility, all men of this stamp will undoubtedly prefer, and greatly prefer these early writers of the drama to any who have succeeded them. To enable the reader to form a clear judgment upon the merits of our ancient and modern dramatists, perhaps no more effectual mode could be adopted than to bring before him passages from the former, compared with the same passages adapted by the latter to present representation. The task would be easy, and one of these contrasts already produced by Seward, in his preface to Beaumont and Fletcher, I will quote here. "Mr. Cibber" says Seward, "has consolidated two of our author's plays, the *Elder Brother*, and the *Custom of the Country*, to form his *Love Makes a Man*, or the *Fops Fortune*. In the former there are two old French noblemen, Lewis and Brisac, the first proud of his family and fortune, the other of his magisterial power and dignity; neither men of learning, and therefore preferring courtly accomplishments, and the knowledge of the world, to the deepest knowledge of books, and the most extensive literature. Fletcher makes Brisac and

Lewis thus treat of the marriage between their children."

Bri. Good Monsieur Lewis, I esteem myself
 Much honor'd in your clear intent to join
 Our ancient families, and make them one :
 And 'twill take from my age and cares, to live
 And see what you have purposed put in act ;
 Of which your visit at this present is
 A hopeful omen ; I each minute expecting
 The arrival of my sons ; I have not wrong'd
 Their birth for want of means and education,
 To shape them to what course each was addicted ;
 And therefore that we may proceed discreetly,
 Since what's concluded rashly seldom prospers,
 You first shall take a strict perusal of them,
 And then from your allowance, your fair daughter
 May fashion her affection.

Lewis. Mousieur Brisac
 You offer fair and nobly, and I'll meet you
 In the same line of honor ; and, I hope,
 Being blest but with one daughter, I shall not
 Appear impertinently curious,
 Tho' with my utmost vigilance and study
 I labour to bestow her to her worth :
 Let others speak her form, and future fortune
 From me descending to her, I in that
 Sit down in silence.

Bri. You may, my lord, securely,
 Since fame aloud proclaimeth her perfections,
 Commanding all men's tongues to sing her praises.

So much for Fletcher. Cibber changes the names of the two old gentlemen into

those of Charino and Antonio, and thus they confer.

Ant. Without compliment, my old friend, I shall think myself much honored in your alliance: our families are both ancient, our children young, and able to support them; and I think the sooner we set them to work the better.

Cha. Sir, you offer fair and nobly, and shall find I dare meet you in the same line of honor: and I hope, since I have but one girl in the world, you wont think me a troublesome old fool, if I endeavour to bestow her to her worth: therefore, if you please, before we shake hands, a word or two by the bye, for I have some considerable questions to ask you.

Ant. Ask 'em.

Cha. Well: in the first place you say you have two sons.

Ant. Exactly.

Cha. And you are willing that one of them should marry my daughter.

Ant. Willing.

Cha. My daughter Angellina.

Ant. Angellina.

Cha. And you are also content that the said Angellina shall survey them both, and (with my allowance) take to her lawful husband, which of 'em she pleases.

Ant. Content.

Cha. And you farther promise, that the person by her (and me) so chosen, (be it older or younger) shall be your sole heir; that is to say, shall be in conditional possession, of at least three parts of your estate. You know the conditions, and this you positively promise?

Ant. To perform.

Cha. Why then as the last token of my full consent and approbation, I give you my hand.

Ant. There's mine.

Cha. Is't a match?

Ant. A match.

Cha. Done.

Ant. Done.

Cha. And done—that's enough."

"Strike out an expression or two of Fletcher's," exclaims the indignantly triumphant editor, "and a couple of graziers would put more sense into an ox bargain." —The instance here adduced, however unfavourable to modern taste, is calculated to make an impression not very unjust.

Various observations will doubtless be made by the reader on the perusal of these early dramatists. He will particularly remark their entire disregard of the unities, which though sometimes revolting, from its extreme licentiousness, perpetually affords situations highly calculated for poetic exertions. There is another point of still more importance. They were more fortunate than writers of the same class at present in having a much wider range for the choice of their subjects. The laws of the drama being not so precisely fixed gave them every latitude, even to the most licentious fiction, in the selection of their plots. Such plots were mostly taken from some popular romance, or dependant upon magical powers, and if it be difficult to re-

present men as acting in fictitious situations so as to impress an audience with the belief, that if the situations could occur, the mode of action would be precisely that displayed on the stage, we must at the same time feel that the judgment of criticism is less rigid, where our experience of human nature gives us no exact rule by which to decide, and that there are occasionally beauties in the very formation of such plots, which in some degree compensate for other errors. At present the sole province of the drama is considered to be the representation of real life, or if the imagination or romance be consulted, it is to supply the stage merely with a vehicle for splendid decoration. That our modern rule is unnecessarily severe may be sufficiently proved by the "Tempest and Midsummer Night's Dream" of Shakespeare, "The Faithful Sheperdess" of Fletcher, and "The Picture" of Massinger, each of which plays is crowded with every excellence, and we may fairly conclude, that if it were relaxed, we should still be favored with dramatic efforts from the higher class of genius, which now shrinks with alarm from the severity of a criticism avowedly founded upon every man's own experience.

One modern author has indeed made some attempts to recall ideal beings to the drama, and in one of his plays he has eminently succeeded. Generally speaking however, the introduction of ghosts is, I think, the least pleasing of this style of dramatic composition.

The political commotions and the temper of the times which marked the period between the middle of the reign of Charles I. and the restoration, as they were unfavorable to literature in general, so were they peculiarly hostile to the drama. We may judge of the truth of this assertion by the fact, that the abolition of all play-houses for ever was an article positively insisted upon in the preliminaries to the treaty of Uxbridge. The age however immediately succeeding the restoration amply paid for this attack. The people of England indeed at this time exhibited a most striking instance upon the largest possible scale of the tendency of the human mind to rush between extremes. They who but a few years before had displayed a real or affected regard for religion in the most trivial circumstances of life, who in a solemn treaty had stipulated the abolition of the theatre, amongst whom the cold and cheerless

opinions of Fox had found votaries and proselytes, were now receiving with applause the wit of Rochester, the revived comedies of Fletcher, and the more disgusting and naked obscenities of Buckingham, Dryden, and Wycherley. Indeed I believe it may justly be remarked, that our comedy at this period touched it's lowest point of degradation. It was blotted with all the faults of it's great originators, while it retained but little of their feeling, their character, their truth, or their poetry. So intolerable was the indelicacy, that ladies either absented themselves entirely from the first performance of a play, or else appeared in masks—a custom which Cibber, in his life published in 1740, says, that he remembered. The “Rehearsal” is too well known to require any criticism. Equally famous for it's indelicacy and it's wit, it is now chiefly to be admired as having led the way and marked out a plan for an author of our own time, in whose praise all men must concur, as having exhibited one of the most perfect models of dramatic dialogue this or any other country can boast. In Dryden's tragic-comedy of the “Spanish Fryar,” with which he himself is so satisfied, the comic parts are far too distinct

from the tragic. They are certainly amusing, but no delineation of character is even attempted in them, nor is the wit good enough to overcome the disgust the reader feels at their extreme grossness, which is set in a disastrous relief by the solemn inflated scenes of the tragedy. His "*Love in a Nunnery*," is formed upon a more regular plan, being purely a comedy. For his age it may be pronounced a chaste and delicate play, as it is marked by few instances of grossness, and perhaps, for this more than any other reason, was unsuccessful in the representation. I just hint at his comedy of *Limberham*, only to observe, that this illustrious poet seems to have formed an idea of comedy equally erroneous and disparaging. The epic, the lyric, and the tragic muses have certainly great obligations to Dryden—he gave them an encrease, a large encrease, of beauty, dignity, and empire. If the comic muse ventures to join the train, it must be with blushes and accusations. Wycherley's "*Country Girl*," purified by the criticism of Garrick, and embellished by most felicitous and exquisite acting, still retains the public applause. It is a light amusing production, but the incidents are improbable and the characters

unnatural. It bears a close resemblance to " *l'Ecole de Femmes*," of Moliere. Moody is Arnolphe, Belville is Horace, Peggy is Agnes. The imposition upon the guardian by making him the bearer of a letter to the lover is from " *l'Ecole de Maris*." In hinting this comparison it is impossible not to observe, though unfavorably for our country, that at the time when the English stage was disgraced by an obscenity, frequently as devoid of passion as of wit, Moliere was at once delighting and refining our more polished neighbours, by compositions in which genuine wit neither requires nor seeks the aid of the grosser feelings, in which a pure and elegant dialogue exhibits in description all but what ought to be concealed, and in morality whatever does not belong to the pulpit. The last dramatic writer I shall mention as belonging to this period is the celebrated Cowley. The comedy of the " *Guardian*," which he wrote in early life, he adapted to the stage at this period under the name of " *The Cutter of Coleman-street*." It is a play altogether unworthy the author's great name, yet notwithstanding its slender wit, its coarse incidents, and the character of Aurelia, it may be read with some degree of in-

terest as affording a curious picture of the times.

Dryden died in 1701—not before the appearance of four of Congreve's plays, all written before he was five and twenty, had afforded the most astonishing instance of early talents, perhaps ever exhibited. Southern in lines of very considerable merit and beauty, thus invokes the rising splendor.

“ Dryden has long extended his command
 By right divine, quite through the muses' land
 Absolute lord : and holding now from none,
 But great Apollo, his undoubted crown,
 (That empire settled and grown old in power)
 Can wish for nothing, but a successor :
 Not to enlarge his limits but maintain
 Those provinces, which he alone could gain :
 His eldest Wycherley, in wise retreat,
 Thought it not worth his quiet to be great :
 Loose, wand'ring Etherege, in wild pleasures lost,
 And foreign interests, to his hopes long lost :
 Poor Lee and Otway dead! Congreve appears
 The darling and last comfort of his years :
 May'st thou live long in thy great master's smiles,
 And growing under him adorn these isles :
 But when—when part of him (be that but late)
 His body yielding must submit to fate,
 Leaving his deathless works and thee behind,
 (The natural successor of his mind)
 Then mayst thou finish what he has begun :
 Heir to his merit, be in fame his son :
 What thou hast done shews all is in thy power:
 And to write better, only must write more.”

These lines evidently allude to Congreve's tragic, as well as his comic powers, the former of which he had exhibited in his "Mourning Bride." The latter however are here under consideration exclusively. The fair and rich promise of his youth, thus splendidly coloured by the hand of poetry and friendship was not kept. Congreve wrote but one play more, entitled "The Way of the World," which was not very successful, and which indeed cannot be allowed to surpass in force and exuberance of wit, his "Love for Love," while its grossness and its intricacy of plot, prove that he had not corrected his early errors. Johnson's criticism upon Congreve is in his best manner. "Congreve has merit of the highest kind; he is an original writer, who borrowed neither the models of his plot, nor the manner of his dialogue. Of his plays I cannot speak distinctly; for since I inspected them, many years have passed; but what remains upon my memory is, that his characters are commonly fictitious and artificial, with very little of nature, and not much of life. He formed a peculiar idea of comic excellence, which he supposed to consist in gay remarks and unexpected answers; but that which he

endeavoured, he seldom failed of performing. His scenes exhibit not much of humour, imagery, or passion : his personages are a kind of intellectual gladiators ; every sentence is to ward or strike ; the contest of smartness is never intermitted ; his wit is a meteor playing to and fro with alternate coruscations. His comedies have therefore, in some degree, the operation of tragedies, they surprize rather than divert, and raise admiration oftener than merriment. But they are the works of a mind replete with images, and quick in combination."

These observations convey, perhaps, as much censure as praise. It is curious to observe the discordant opinions of eminent men, and Dryden may be opposed to Johnson. "As for comedy," he says, "repartee is one of its chiefest graces. The greatest pleasure of an audience, is a chace of wit kept up on both sides, and swiftly managed." That this chace of wit may become harrassing and wearisome to an audience, has been felt, I believe, by every reader or hearer of Congreve's plays, and perhaps part of the reputation attached to his name, may be a continuation of the fame he acquired from the early ripeness

of his genius, and not altogether owing to the intrinsic excellence of his productions. His merits are, however, very high—a vigorous and original mind may be traced every where, luxuriating in it's favorite employment, and he deserves immortal honor, as being the first who chose his incidents from common life, and made his plot subservient to his dialogue. Unless, indeed, he more properly deserves the humbler praise only of having restored the stile Shakespeare had exhibited in his “Merry Wives of Windsor,” and occasionally in other plays. With regard to the characters which are suited to comedy, we must take his own opinion, and certainly his strict attention to it, constitutes one of the chief excellencies of his productions. “Those characters,” he observes, “that are wont to be ridiculed in most of our comedies, are of fools so gross, that in my humble opinion they should rather disturb than divert the well-natured and reflecting part of an audience; they are rather the objects of charity than contempt, and instead of moving our mirth, they ought very often to excite our compassion.” He should have added, that the characters should be natural and usual, as well as fit

objects of ridicule. This opinion however, as far as it goes, seems strictly just, and therefore it may be doubted whether Shakespeare's characters of Slender and Sir Hugh Evans, or even the more comic Acres of Mr. Sheridan, are calculated to afford much amusement. For the same reason all religious distinctions and personal defects, if unattended with affectation, are improper objects of comedy. The most glaring example of this latter fault which occurs to me, may be found in "The little French Lawyer," of Beaumont and Fletcher, where the misfortunes of Champernelle, a brave and honorable soldier, incurred in fighting the battles of his country, are consigned to the laughter of the theatre.

We must not take our leave of this eminent dramatist, without noticing an additional fault in him, and that of considerable magnitude. His characters want relief. They are too uniformly either vicious or ridiculous. Congreve was certainly a most fortunate man, yet it might be supposed from a perusal of his plays, that he had never found a friend who had not betrayed him, or fallen in love with any woman who had not jilted him. Like

the miserable Schahzenan, in the introductory story to the Arabian Nights, it might be imagined, that after some gross infidelity, or treachery to himself, he found consolation, and absolutely grew merry, from the reflection, that he only shared the common fate of mankind. The unwearied exercise of his wit might be pardoned, if it was now and then subservient to the affections. Congreve died in 1728-9.

Amongst the fellow labourers of Congreve were Gay, Steele, and Addison. Of the numerous dramatic efforts of the first of these celebrated men, the only one which acquired or deserved the marked approbation of the public was the "Beggar's Opera," of which perhaps it is sufficient commendation to say, that after a reception of unparalleled success, it still retains the applause of the public in defiance of a prevalent opinion upon the pernicious nature of its tendency. It is a composition of a singular rather than a vigorous mind, and the way in which the author trifles with the gallows, has at least the charm of novelty. Newgate becomes perfectly attractive in his hands, displaying a happy union of manly

vigour and Arcadian simplicity. The dialogue is poor, but the songs are extremely fortunate, full of humorous and amusing conceits, set off in smooth, harmonious, and appropriate versification. It is impossible to read the songs of the Beggar's Opera without feeling that they possess a peculiar and singular charm, yet it is perplexing to say exactly in what this charm consists. I will quote one at random. Upon the parting of Polly and Macheath in the first act, thus the fair one sings.—

Polly. O what pain it is to part!
 Can I leave thee, can I leave thee?
 O what pain it is to part!
 Can thy Polly ever leave thee?
 But lest death my love should thwart
 And bring thee to the fatal cart,
 Thus I tear thee from my bleeding heart!
 Fly hence and let me leave thee.

Certainly the idea in the sixth line, is ill-calculated to provoke mirth—as little can the whole song be called affecting—the lovers of wit, I believe, would scarcely compliment it with their approbation, yet upon the whole it is pleasing. Its excellence, I believe, depends chiefly on humour, the principal exercise of which

seems to consist in adapting sentiments or characters to new and improbable situations.

The Beggar's Opera, we are told by Johnson, was written in ridicule of the musical Italian drama, which it drove out of England for the season. This circumstance leads us to compare the merits of the two species of composition. If the recitative of the Italian opera, occasionally rising into airs and songs, has too little resemblance to common life, we must allow that a low and farcical dialogue, abruptly interrupted by hautboys and violins, preceding the refined efforts of a performer, who, a moment before, has been exhibiting the most common and ludicrous incidents, or engaged in the most vulgar conversation, is still less natural than the former. If a conversation was ever carried on in song, as some authors conjecture to have been the case in the infancy of society, it was probably conducted nearly on the plan of the Italian drama. The recitative seems to approach the dialogue of common life as closely as music can, and any extraordinary burst of passion is naturally exhibited in the more elevated exertion of the voice, which, on this supposition, must still be

musical. On the other hand the English opera is suited to no state of society, nor can we suppose it to be adopted in any variation of our being. Men who took a delight in such incidents as are usually crowded into our operas, or who had so easy and cheap a mode of delivering their thoughts, would hardly find either taste or diligence sufficient for music. At all events, if they sung at all, it would be in moments of entire listlessness and leisure, and not when some violent emotion impelled them to immediate exertion. In our English opera however, when the plot is scarcely going on, the actors chatter in most vulgar prose, and the occurrence of any interesting incident is usually denoted by a nod to the orchestra and the striking up of the violins. Our best opera is certainly "the Duenna" of Mr. Sheridan, but still the author seems spoilt by the law under which he writes. Gay was the founder of this species of writing, and were it not for the applause which the public have bestowed upon it, I should say that Mr. Sheridan, in bringing it to perfection, has proved that no art can compensate an absurd and extreme violation of nature.

It seems to me that a middle course might be adopted, by which we might avoid this monstrous mixture of song and farcical prose, and at the same time dismiss the weariness of the Italian recitative. No one at all conversant with our early dramatic writers can doubt the great, not to say the peculiar adaptation of English blank verse to comedy. If this was substituted for the present dialogue of our opera, the species of drama now under discussion would read nearly as the Italian, while upon the stage the harmony of the versification would soften down the abruptness of the change between mere prose and song. Such a stile being adopted, we might, like the Italians, have our tragic and our comic operas. the more violent emotions of each being expressed by songs, while the common incidents of the piece and the general plot, were conducted in blank verse. A tragedy of this sort would in some respects resemble the Grecian, upon the model of which Mr. Mason's "Elfrida" or "Caractacus" shew that English plays of very considerable interest may be founded. It would differ from it in having the musical parts more accidental, shorter, more varied, and distributed amongst all the actors.

Nevertheless, considering the genius of our language and our people, the present stile of our opera, hostile as it is to every feeling of correct taste, is preferable to that chosen by Congreve in his “Semele” and Addison in his “Rosamond.” This is the other extreme. The whole dialogue is written for music, the songs being marked out by rhyme and italics. What shall we say of the manner in which the king of heaven, addressing Semele, at once flatters himself and his love.

Jupiter. Thy sex of Jove's the master-piece,
 Thou, of thy sex, art most excelling.
 Frailty in thee is ornament,
 In thee perfection.
 Giv'n to agitate the mind,
 And keep awake men's passions :
 To banish indolence,
 And dull repose,
 The foes of transport
 And of pleasure.

We are not told if the opera from which the above quotation is made was represented. Probably not. Mr. Addison's Rosamond was represented and failed. The songs are not poetic, and the story is unskilfully managed. However, the grand fault is in the original and general plan of the author, who, adapting himself to the Italian recitative, either introduces a style unsuitable

both to our language and our taste, or intending part to be sung and part to be said, gives to be spoken a dialogue which is entirely appropriate to music. Addison goes farther than Congreve, his whole composition being in rhyme. A short quotation from the *recitative* will suffice.

What place is here !
 What scenes appear !
 Where'er I turn my eyes,
 All around
 Enchanted ground
 And soft Elysiums rise :
 Flow'ry mountains,
 Mossy fountains,
 Shady woods,
 Chrystal floods,
 With wild variety surprize.
 ——————
 Purple scenes,
 Winding greens,
 Gloom's inviting
 Birds delighting, &c.

This is miserable. Our recitative could never possess sufficient harmony to recommend such puerility. Still less tolerable without the aid of music must be a metre, which is either rugged and dissonant or fliprant and childish. Would it not be better to conduct the general plot in blank verse, and reserve such metre as I have just quoted entirely for the musical parts.

Sir Richard Steele, more justly perhaps

than any of our authors, may be styled the English Terence. He imitates the Roman dramatist closely, and he imitates him with success. His dialogue is vigorous and easy, with considerable power in exciting the softer emotions. He merits peculiar notice in a general view of this nature, as having introduced amongst us the pathetic comedy now so fashionable. This species of drama is very distinct from the tragic-comedy of our earlier writers. With them the tragic parts are usually given in blank verse, nor are they often so blended with the comic as to aim at producing mirth and sorrow in the same scene. An instance of this entire separation occurs in many of Shakespeare's historical plays, and in Dryden's "Spanish Friar." Moreover, these authors delineate a passion of a magnitude, which in truth constitutes the distinction and essence of tragedy, as the love of Memnon for the princess in the "Mad Lover" of Beaumont and Fletcher, that of Evanthe and Valerio in "The Wife for a Month;" or that of Theodosius for Athenais in Massinger's "Emperor of the East." Add to this, that their personages are of no less rank than princes. In thus cursorily noticing the tragic-comedy of our early writers, I would recommend as an excel-

lent and beautiful production of this nature, the “Maid of Honor” of Massinger. It is indeed a most happy composition. The sublime virtue of Camiola is decisively above comedy, yet there is no affliction in the play severe enough to render it exclusively tragic. But if our ancient tragic-comedies are widely distinct from the style adopted by Steele, neither do the passages of beautiful and affecting pathos, so frequently to be found in Shakespear’s comedies, bring the latter to a close resemblance with those here under consideration. Shakespeare forms his scheme carelessly, and if in his progress an opportunity occurs of making an appeal to the affections, he seizes it with a felicity, which is the privilege only of genius. There are beautiful instances of the greatest success in this stile in “The Twelfth Night,” where Viola covertly gives the history of her passion, and in “As You Like It,” where Orlando interrupts the banquet of the duke. But it evidently depended upon the momentary humour of the poet whether he made the passages here alluded to serious or comic, while on the other hand the pathos of Sir Richard Steele is interwoven with his original plot, for unless the story of Indiana is affecting, it is nothing. “The Conscious

"Lovers" is founded upon the *Andria* of Terence. I will quote one passage from each of these plays, as an instance of Sir R. Steele's mode of writing, as also for the purpose of shewing a very happy imitation or rather translation of that ancient author. Sir John Bevil proposes to marry his son to the daughter of a rich merchant. At a masquerade, however, he discovers young Bevil's attachment to another lady, and thus he describes the adventure which disclosed it.

Sir J. B. You know I was, last Thursday, at the masquerade; my son, you may remember, soon found us out—he knew his grandfather's habit which I then wore: and though it was in the mode of the last age, yet the maskers, you know, followed us as if we had been the most monstrous figures in that whole assembly.

Humphrey. I remember, indeed, a young man of quality in the habit of a clown, that was particularly troublesome.

Sir J. B. Right—he was too much what he seemed to be—You remember how impertinently he followed and teased us, and would know who we were.—Ay, he followed us till the gentleman who led the lady in the Indian mantle presented that gay creature to the rustic, and bid him (like Cymon in the fable) grow polite by falling in love, and let that worthy old gentleman alone, meaning me. The clown was not reformed, but rudely persisted, and offered to force off my mask; with that the gentleman, throwing off his own, appeared to be my son, and in his concern for me tore off that of the nobleman: at this they

seized each other, the company called the guards, and in the surprize the lady swooned away : upon which my son quitted his adversary, and had now no care but of the lady—when raising her in his arms, “ Art thou gone,” cried he, “ for ever—forbid it heaven!” She revives at his well-known voice—and with the most familiar, though modest gesture, hangs in safety over his shoulders weeping, but wept as in the arms of one before whom she could give herself a loose, were she not under observation : while she hides her face in his neck, he carefully conveys her from the company.

In Terence, the same discovery is made at the funeral of the lady's sister. Thus, old Simo confers with his freed-man Sosia.

Simo. Interea inter mulieres,
Quæ ibi aderant, forté unam adspicis adolescentulam,
Formâ—*So.* Bonâ fortasse. *Si.* et vultu, *Sosia*,
Adeò modesto, adeò venusto, ut nihil supra.
Quæ tum mihi lamentari præter ceteras
Visa est & quæ erat formâ præter ceteras
Honestâ et liberali, accedo ad pedissequas ;
Quæ sit, rogo : Sororem esse aiunt Chrysidis.
Percussit illicè ahimum. At, at, hoc illud est,
Hinc illæ lachrymæ, hæc illa est misericordia.

So. Quam timeo, quorsum evadas. *Si.* funus interim
Procedit : sequimur : ad sepulchrum venimus :
In igrem posita est : fletur. Interea hæc soror,
Quam dixi, ad flammarum accessit imprudentius,
Satis cum periculo : ibi tum examinatus Pamphilus
Benè dissimulatum amorem & celatum indicat.
Accurrit : medium mulierem complectitur :
Mea Glycerium, inquit, quid agis ? cur te is perditum ?
Tum illa, ut consuetum facilè amorem cerneret,
Rejecit se in eum flens, quam familiariter !

I am afraid in this instance, we must acknowledge the superiority of the ancient writer. He has more nature with less pretension. Steele's play of "The Tender Husband," is more strictly comic than "The Conscious Lovers," and is certainly a very amusing production. Bridget probably is the original from which Mr. Sheridan has drawn his Lydia Languish, nor is the copy much if at all improved. Steele is by no means so vigorous and powerful a writer as Congreve, but he has many of his faults. Like Congreve's, his characters are too artificial, and, like his, they aim too much at saying smart things. Of The Conscious Lovers, the plot is perplexed and intricate, and Cimberton is perfectly outrè. In Steele's dialogue the alternate speeches are too long and set, but the language is generally very pure and elegant, and his plays, though they may weary on the stage, will ever be read with interest and pleasure. Steele died in 1728—about the time of the death of Congreve. He has left four plays—The Funeral—The Tender Husband—The Lying Lover—The Conscious Lovers.

Addison's comedy of "The Drummer," can only be mentioned on account of the fame of the author. The dialogue indeed

is natural and easy, and not destitute of humour, but it never rises into wit, and the fundamental incident is puerile and nonsensical. "That it should have been ill-received," says Johnson, "would raise wonder, did we not daily see the capricious distribution of theatrical praise." The moral critic loved Addison for his virtues, as much as he admired him for his talents.

I pass over Cibber and Sir John Vanburgh, writers of considerable, but no characteristic excellence, to notice a comedy called "The School for Wives," written in 1774, by Hugh Kelly. This play is said to have introduced the sentimental comedy amongst us. It was received by the public with the highest applause, and when read appears to have great merit. The humorous parts are entertaining, and there are occasionally very powerful appeals to the softer emotions. One of these indeed is so excellent as to deserve quotation, both for its own merit and for its subject. The profligate infidelities of Belville throw him into continual difficulties. In one of them he receives a challenge from the brother of a lady he is supposed to have seduced—Mrs. Belville hears of the intended duel, and her resistance to

the consolation of Miss Walsingham, who makes a dry and not a very lady-like observation upon the defective execution of our laws, is thus terminated.

Mrs. Bel. No law will ever be effectual till the custom is rendered infamous—Wives must shriek! mothers must agonize! orphans must multiply! unless some blessed hand strips the fascinating glare from honorable murder, and bravely exposes the idol who is worshipped thus in blood. While it is disreputable to obey the laws, we cannot look for reformation:—But if the duellist is once banished from the presence of his sovereign;—if he is for life excluded the confidence of his country:—if a mark of indelible disgrace is stamped upon him, the sword of public justice will be the sole chastiser of wrongs, trifles will not be punished with death, and offences really meriting such a punishment will be reserved for the only proper avenger, the common executioner.”

It is certainly extremely unnatural that Mrs. Belville, in her situation, should give us a sermon upon duelling, but this fault belongs to the style, which is an absurd attempt to assimilate the stage to the pulpit, and never will, it is to be hoped, resemble the conversation of common life. By those who can pardon the style, the instance here given must be admired. The faults of this play are at least equal to its merits. The character of Belville is ill drawn. In the beginning he is so profligate as to disgust, and at the conclusion his refusal of Miss Walsingham’s probationary addresses is so violent an instance of amendment, that

we are left with very faint hopes of his reformation being lasting.

The only remaining comic author who occurs to me as having a style peculiar to himself, is Foote. His productions are certainly of a very singular cast, and yet it is not very easy to describe this singularity. Perhaps it consists in this, that he is highly amusing, and produces a very considerable effect in defiance of all the best rules of comedy. His characters, instead of "representing a species," are individuals, which no man, who had not depended for his subsistence on finding such persons, could ever have discovered. In delineating them he sometimes takes you where it is impossible to follow him without disgust, and his writings were indebted for much of their success to their personality. He descends to the lowest stage tricks, endeavouring to amuse by the adoption of ludicrous names, or the most improbable and extravagant incidents. He accomplishes his purpose, which is to shew nature in her distortions, and to raise the laugh of the vulgar rather than the smile of the judicious. His stile is highly censurable on every account, but, such as it is, he has brought it to perfection, and it may perhaps be recommended to the classic

reader by the recollection that it approaches that of the ancient Greek comedy more nearly than any which has appeared on our stage. To the world at large he must appear as having atoned, too deeply atoned, for his theatrical crimes, by a death which proves him indeed to have deserved a better fortune, and by a fame, which as far as it arose from the success of personal satire, must diminish in proportion as the individuals against whom it was directed are forgotten.

Every one who has been accustomed to our best comedy, will be induced, on reading Foote's plays, to make a comparison between wit, to which they have little or no pretension, and humour, which is their chief characteristic. There is an excellent definition, or rather description of wit in Johnson's life of Cowley. "Wit is that, which is at once natural and new—that, which though not obvious, is, upon its first production, acknowledged to be just, that which, he that never found it, wonders how he missed." "Abstracted from its effects upon the hearer, it may be more vigorously and philosophically considered as a kind of *concordia discors*; a combination of dissimilar images, or dis-

covery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike."* Now to come to a conception of humour, we must nearly reverse this description. Humour is that, which is not only new, but unnatural, that which, so far from being obvious, we are surprised it should ever have been discovered. Its purpose is not to find resemblances in common objects, but to produce those which are uncommon. Wit compares, humour separates—wit is content with things as they are, humour continually searches for novelty, or distorts and caricatures what is old—wit is placid and satisfied, not even waiting for its objects—humour is noisy and restless, hunting for its prey—wit is delicate and microscopic, humour is gross and sees only what is large—wit creates a sensation more durable than mirth—we remember it with pleasure and endeavour to recall it—humour is rewarded by a momentary laugh, which we dismiss with willingness and recollect with shame.

Having now briefly mentioned our great comic leaders, I would proceed to point

* This description will perhaps help to explain a compliment paid to Sir Philip Sidney's wit by Sir Henry Wotton, who said, "it was the very essence of congruity."
Life of Sir P. Sid. by Zouch.

out their respective followers and adherents. Our theatre has been so prolific, that a classification of this nature would be extremely desirable, but I am not sure that it is practicable to any extent. The extreme latitude of choice that gives decision to the style of an author, at the same time tends to produce an endless variety. However, there are undoubtedly grand lines of distinction originating in the eminent writers above-named, which may serve to limit the confusion of such multifarious productions. The plays of Goldsmith, of Cibber, when he writes from himself, those of Cumberland, the Clandestine Marriage, the Drummer, the School for Lovers (formed on *le Testament* of Fontenelle, and a very happy exemplification of this style) and the like, may be classed with Sir Richard Steele's. Farquhar and Hoadly remind us of our early authors. They can scarcely, however, be carried so far back as the days of Fletcher, but must be dropped with Dryden and Wycherley. The numerous tribe of sentimental comedies, which now begin to sicken the public, take their origin from "The School for Wives," and Mr. Sheridan is Congreve chastised. Mr. Sheridan has new-moulded the plays of Congreve, and in such a manner as to

perfect all his merits, while he dismisses his grosser errors. Two of his faults he appears to me to retain, in his characters being too artificial, and his repartee too incessant. The scenes in "The Rivals," improperly termed sentimental, where Julia appears, are I believe entirely the author's own, and in every line they bear the impression of his transcendant genius, abounding in beauties which would have escaped common eyes, but no sooner presented than their charm is acknowledged. Their fault is of the same nature with that already mentioned—as his comic personages are too witty, his Julia seems to me rather too eloquent. On reviewing Congreve and Sheridan, we may justly transfer an ancient comparison to these authors, and say, that the muse of Congreve is an abandoned prostitute, that of Sheridan, a modest woman—Or adopting the finer observation of Voltaire, from his remarks upon the merits of Homer and Virgil, we may remark, with a justice not to be found in the original application, that if Congreve made Sheridan, it is his best work.*

* If however, we compare the more correct parts of Congreve's plays, with the parallel passages of our living dramatist, the superiority of the latter is not very apparent.

The present stile of comedy is certainly different from what ever appeared before, and its originality consists in exhibiting a most extraordinary mixture of all the stiles, each of which it caricatures. It has a vivacity, a rapidity, and audacity of incident, equal to what may be found in the worst of our ancient comedies. The pathetic parts of the plot are almost too inflated for tragedy, and are whimsically contrasted with the dwarfish nature of the persons who figure in it, and who are very far indeed from the size and dignity consonant to the higher walks of the drama—It's characters are totally artificial, and aim much at something like Congreve's smartness of repartee—finally, with this singular farrago, is mingled a sufficient quantity of what is termed sentiment. Thus we have daggers, bloody handkerchiefs, burning houses, gunpowder explosions, rayless dungeons, filial robberies, fraternal mur-

I refer particularly to passages, in which the balance must, I think, remain undecided. Thus, part of a scene in Congreve's Way of the World, where Mirabel and Witwood criticise the character of Petulant—(see page 15) may be compared with the dialogue in the Critic, where Sneer and Dangle amuse themselves at the expense of Sir Fretful Plagiary. (See page 11.) There are other passages bearing an equal resemblance.

ders, sleepless vengeance, and other of these light, playful horrors, mixed up with the sighs of desponding lovers and moral reflexions, and unsuccessful witticismis ; all presented to you in a careless, inattentive, abrupt dialogue, where the actors are no where allowed to say more than two or three words at a time, unless they tell a long, tedious, tremendous story. We may pardon the occasionally painful colouring of our ancient dramatists, because it seems to arise from the undisciplined touch of too vigorous a hand ; we may overlook their accidental distortions, in our amazement at their vigour, their size, and their splendor. But I fear the most indulgent critic will maintain, that our present drama affords no apology for inaccuracies, and that where the whole is so minute, even an error in taste is a sufficient condemnation.

With regard to the efforts which have lately been made to occupy the stage with scenes, which have avowedly nothing to recommend them but splendid decoration and pantomimical surprises, the applause with which they have been received can only be regarded as a melancholy proof of the decline of our literary and dramatic

taste. The Augustan age seems to be past from us, and the remarks of the philosophic historian of the Greek and Roman drama are most applicable to our present state. "Tragedy," he observes, "degenerated in Greece from the time of Aristotle, and in Rome after Augustus. At Rome and Athens comedy produced mimi, pantomimes, burlettas, tricks, and farces, for the sake of variety; such is the character and such the madness of the mind of man. It is satisfied with having made great conquests, and gives them up to attempt others, which are far from answering its expectation, and only enables it to discover its own folly, weakness, and deviations." The obvious application of this remark to ourselves may in part be owing to the excessive size of our theatres, one of which is so large as to render almost entirely vain any attempt to please by displaying the beauties of dialogue or the modest graces of action. The man of real genius (I include both author and actor) must retire in alarm from a stage, on which, either to be seen or heard, he must surrender the best characteristics of his nature, on which he must represent passion by clamour, and pathos by murmurs. This

evil must be ascribed in great measure to the exclusive patents with which our theatres are privileged, which insure to the proprietor crowded houses, at the loss of all the legitimate purposes of theatrical exhibition, which like all other monopolies are extremely pernicious to the general interest, and which render a comparison between the public amusements of London and Paris, so extremely disadvantageous to the metropolis of England. It has however been said that, if the theatres were multiplied, as we have not a sufficient number of good plays for more than one or two, the consequences would be a speedy satiety in the public mind with regard to all the dramas most worthy notice, and the necessity of having recourse to performances, which a sound judgment would otherwise reject. If there is any truth in this observation, made by the experienced though not disinterested Cibber, we are between two dangers, the magnitude of one or two theatres and the competition of a greater number. There is probably a middle course; and a theatre small enough to give advantage to the best plays, and devoted solely to them, sufficiently patronized by the court to render it fashionable, though opened only once or

twice a week, would perhaps be attended with benefit to the public taste.

After having been so diffuse upon the comedies of others, it may now be expected that I should say something of my own. The first I have republished chiefly with a view of stripping the principal character of a false glare, which could only have been thrown around him by the careless and rash hand of youth. The second, which is entirely new, is not, as far as I know, liable to any moral exception, nor can it be censured, I think, for many of the faults I have pointed out in the preceding pages. My aim at least was to exhibit a dialogue that should be unaffected and yet not altogether trifling, characters that should not be solitary individuals, a plot that should not be intricate, incidents that should not be forced or bold, and allusions without indelicacy or grossness. The character of O'Neale is certainly not copied from Mr. Sheridan's Sir Lucius O'Trigger, and for that reason, perhaps, I may appear to many to stand in need of an apology. Sir Lucius, however, perhaps too boldly sketched for any time, is now at all events the creature of other days, and is as rarely to be found in Ireland as squire Western

in this country. My object was to form a contrast between an Irishman and an Englishman, as they frequently appear in the higher ranks of life, the one of an ardent temper breaking through the ordinary forms of society, and betrayed into slight difficulties, the other in the same proportion sinking under these forms, and through subservience to them forfeiting the originality of his character. Could I hope that I had in any measure succeeded in this attempt, I might, perhaps, boast of having assisted to destroy prejudices always disgraceful, and now, since the increased intercourse between the two countries, peculiarly injurious.

With regard to the tragedies of this volume, the subjects have always appeared to me singularly adapted to tragic representation. In the first I intended to exhibit a lady of high rank, splendid accomplishments, great mental qualifications, and spotless character, so impressed with the necessity of preserving her reputation unstained, so inflamed with the love of such a reputation, as to set at defiance whatever natural affections might interfere with this leading and darling passion of her soul. Nor is this conduct by any means uncom-

mon. Instances have very frequently occurred of unfortunate females destroying or endeavouring to destroy the fruit of illicit love, influenced undoubtedly, in part at least, by the feelings, which may surely be attributed with greater force and propriety to a lady, the last descendant and heiress of a noble house, stimulated by the idea that she has not only her own fame to support, but that of a long line of ancestry connected with it. To increase the just and legitimate interest in favor of my heroine, I have represented her as innocent, though I confess with a boldness in my incident, which makes me fly with some pleasure to the example of Richardson in his *Clarissa Harlowe*. To render her prominent in the piece, I was less anxious to bring out any other character. The reader, perhaps, unfortunately for me, may be induced to make some comparison between my tragedy and the “*Mysterious Mother*” of Lord Orford. In that play, however, which affords a most favorable specimen of the powerful mind of its author, so many circumstances of horror are introduced, that it may be doubted whether the pleasure of the perusal is not more than balanced by painful sensations. The

noble author himself is aware of this disadvantage, yet has he unaccountably added some incidents of new and accumulated guilt to those which were the ground-work of the original story. In "the Fair Penitent" of Rowe, the lady is too partial to her crime to awaken much pity towards her misfortunes, or much desire that her reputation may be preserved; and her boisterous vulgarity, with great difficulty suppressed by the smooth regularity of the verse, is a quality tending still more to weaken the interest she might otherwise have created. Massinger in his "Fatal Dowry," which the last mentioned author has so disadvantageously imitated, attenuating his characters, weakening his pathos, depressing his sublimity, and perverting his morality, has given but a short, though indeed a most splendid moment of contrition and alarm to the guilty Beaumelle, and upon the whole the subject seems still open to any who devote their time to tragic representation.

The foundation of my second tragedy is not less perilous than the aim of a noble and gallant prince, to recover his throne from an usurper, who has murdered his father. Such a subject we may suppose has

not escaped the notice of those great masters of the drama who have illustrated the countries where the theatre has been most the object of national taste and regard. May I be excused for offering a few observations upon the Electra of Sophocles, the Semiramis of Crebillon, that of Voltaire, and the Hamlet of Shakespeare, as the best mode of shewing the view, in which the difficult task I have undertaken appears to me. If in these remarks I dwell upon defects rather than merits, it is only to answer my immediate purpose. It is superfluous indeed to point out the excellencies of such authors—they are acknowledged by every judgment, and felt by every breast.

In the Electra of Sophocles, the whole interest of the piece, as is manifest from its title, depends upon a female. Her character is throughout well sustained, and is truly noble and sublime. The speech she makes at her entrânce, is in a high strain of poetic beauty, nor does she ever descend from the elevation she has assumed. I will venture a translation, instead of giving the original Greek.

Insensate he ! who can forget

A murder'd parent in his tomb !

But me those sorrowing strains befit,

That mourn for Itys'—Itys' doom !

Eternal woes—I imitate and love,
From that lamenting bird, the messenger of Jove :
All suffering Niobe, I worship thee alone,
That weep'st thyself to stone ;
Yet not the marble sleeps,
But still for ever, ever, ever weeps.

When her prudent sister Chrysothemis recommends caution, she spurns the advice as unworthy of her—Her life, afflicted and dishonored as it is, excites in her no attention, and when she is warned of her probable destruction from her extreme imprudence, she glories in the thought that she shall fall endeavouring to avenge her father. In the subsequent dialogue between Electra and her mother, appears very evidently the general error of the plot, which is, that the author has exhibited in a woman, a passion, as far as possible from feminine, and has made the brother, who ought to have been his hero, the mere instrument of designs, which a woman never would have entertained. The consequence is obvious, in a scene where the mother and daughter abuse each other very vulgarly and very disgustingly. When the former tells Electra that she would not dare to lament before the house, if Egisthus was at home, and threatens her with punishment when he returns, the conversation is unworthy the dignity of tragedy. It must be added,

that there is some want of skill, in representing Clytemnestra, as stating her reason so strongly for slaying her husband, namely, that he had sacrificed her daughter, for thus an interest is created in favor of the mother, which certainly for the sake of the heroine, ought to be kept down as much as possible. We rejoice when the dialogue between the mother and daughter is interrupted by the tutor of Orestes, relating, according to an agreement, made at the opening of the play, between him and the young prince (I did not notice the son of Agamemnon before, as it is evidently the author's wish, to render him entirely insignificant) the death of the latter. The narration is extremely simple and affecting, but would it not have been better to have put it into the mouth of Pylades, a friend, who is brought on the stage merely for dramatic effect, and never opens his lips during the whole representation. This tutor is a most humiliating attendant. He withdraws with Clytemnestra, to converse upon a subject which gives her so much pleasure, and the lamentations of Electra are interrupted by the entrance of Chrysothemis. Now follows a dialogue between the two sisters, of extraordinary beauty. Chrysothemis has seen upon her father's tomb, certain offerings which she ascribes to Orestes.

Which when I saw, familiar they appear'd.
 To my afflicted soul, and prov'd, methought,
 That he, of all men we have ever lov'd
 The most, Orestes, had been there before me :
 I rais'd my hands, but words found not their way :
 Then from pure joy my eyes were filled with tears.

This unintentional and affecting mockery on the griefs of Electra, who has just received intelligence, by her undoubted, of her brother's death, is exquisitely managed. She now takes the opportunity of persuading her sister to co-operate with her in her plans, and thus she foretels the applause of mankind.

For who, stranger or fellow-countryman,
 With praises, such as these, will not receive us ?
 " Behold, my friends, behold and bless these sisters,
 Who their paternal house preserv'd to glory,
 And, prodigal of life, their enemies,
 In high prosperity elate, o'erthrew :
 All men must love them, all men rev'rence them :
 Or at the feast or in the crowded city,
 For their great virtue, all must do them honor." "
 Such are the words that men shall utter round us,
 Living or dead renown shall never leave us !
 Then be persuaded—labour for your father,
 Aid, aid your sister—both of us relieving,
 Me and yourself, from this dread load of evils :
 The nobly born cannot exist in shame.

This passage is truly pathetic and sublime, yet we cannot avoid wishing to change the sex of the speaker, and when her sister bids her remember that " she is a

woman, not a man," we are compelled to own the justice of the rebuke. The two ladies separate, each more than ever determined, as is usually the case after long argument, to follow her own plan.

At length, after a short chorus of no very distinguished merit, more than two thirds of the play being now past, Orestes and Electra meet, the friends of the former carrying an urn supposed to contain the ashes. The whole of the dialogue from line 1098 to 1209, from the circumstance of Electra requesting the urn, through her lamentation which she pours out on having it in her hands, than which nothing can be more beautiful, to the moment when Orestes having discovered himself, she calls upon her female friends who compose the chorus, to rejoice with her upon the happy event, cannot be surpassed. On receiving the urn thus she exclaims :

Oh monument of him, by me most lov'd,
All of Orestes that remains, how perish
The glorious hopes with which I sent you forth,
In those that wait on your reception now:
For now 'tis but an empty shade I grasp,
But, oh my boy, I sent you forth in splendor.

Afterwards, towards the close of the same speech.

As by a storm thou hast swept all away :

My royal father gone, myself to thee
 For ever, ever lost—thou sunk in nothing !
 Loud laugh our enemies, and my stern mother,
 Yet no mother ! who frequently has heard
 Thy promise sent to me by secret means,
 That thou would'st come to avenge, maddeus with joy.

Thus this affecting scene concludes.

El. And do I hold thee.

Or. May it be for ever !

El. Beloved women—fellow-towns-women,
 This is Orestes standing now before you.
 Once dead in craft and now by craft preserv'd.
Cho. Daughter, we see him, and from purest joy
 Tears of delight come trickling from our eyes.

This dialogue is followed by one in which the original error of the plot before noticed appears more strikingly than ever. Electra still persists in her rash exclamations and lamentations, notwithstanding her brother's prudent injunctions to the contrary. She laughs indeed at the thought of prudence, and stoutly swears by the invincible Diana, that it is beneath her to tremble in a house governed by women. Orestes, who is very far indeed from partaking with his sister in her noble and generous enthusiasm, bids her remember her own experience, that there may be something of the god of war even in women. The whole of this conversation has to me an air of ridicule. The sister is determined to exclaim, the brother equally deter-

mined to prevent her. The boldness of Electra gives the prudence of Orestes an air of meanness ; the caution of the brother magnifies to an unfortunate extent the apparent manliness of the sister. Certainly it is the man who ought to have been heroic. At last when Electra begins to be a little reasonable, and desires Orestes not to fear her betraying him by her joyful looks before her mother, as her former detestation still remains, we wish more and more that she would change places with her brother. It had been better perhaps, both for the morality and taste of the play, if they had both been satisfied with putting Egisthus to death, but as this is not the case, the design to slay the mother should have originated solely in Orestes, who should have been represented as acting under the impulse of a sublime, uncontrollable passion, stimulating him to avenge his father's death. The agency of the gods also, which is always at the command of the ancient writers, should have been strongly brought out. Who would not have admired Electra had she opposed these dreadful designs by her entreaties, if in yielding at last to the ascendancy of Orestes she had sympathized a little with her mother in affliction, for

the sacrifice of her unfortunate sister Iphi-genia.* All this is surely ill managed, and many opportunities of pathos and sublimity are thrown away.

* Those who wish to see the respective wrongs of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra discussed at large, and in harmonious versification, will be gratified by reading the Iphigenia of Racine. It will be shewn there what a mother might be supposed to say and feel on the occasion of her daughter's sacrifice. I refer particularly to the fourth scene of the fourth act, and to the fifth scene in the last act.

Cly. —— O Ciel ! ô mere infortunée !
 De festons odieux ma fille couronnée,
 Tend la gorge aux couteaux, par son pere apprêtés !
 Calchas va dans son sang Barbares ! arretez !
 C'est le pur sang du dieu qui lance le tonnere
 J'entends gronder la foudre & sens trembler la terre
 Un dieu vengeur, un dieu fait retentir ses coups !

Sc. 5. Act 5.

I shall be pardoned for adding the beautiful lines of Lucretius on the same subject.

Aulide quo pacto Triviai virginis aram
 Iphianassäi turpärunt sanguine foëdè
 Ductores Danaüm, delecti, prima virorum.
 Cui simul infula virgineos circumdata comptus
 Ex útrâque pari malarum parte profusa 'st,
 Et mæstum simul ante aras adstare parentem
 Sensit et hunc propter ferrum celare ministros;
 Aspectuque suo lacrymas effundere civeis,
 Muta metu terram genibus sumissa petebat:
 Nec miseræ prodesse in tali tempore quibat,
 Quòd patrio princeps donârat nomine regem.
 Nam sublata virsum manibus tremebundaque ad aras

The scene last mentioned is interrupted by the return of the tutor who, in a most furious and most just rage on account of the noise which has been making, endeavours to awaken his young friends to a sense of their danger. His first words are these.

ω πλεισα μωροι και φρενων τητωμενοι. &c.

Enormous fools! your understandings lost.

This is equally unworthy of the author and his subject, and in truth poor Orestes did not deserve such a scolding. It must be observed that this play affords a pretty strong example against a strict and absolute adherence to the unity of place. It is perfectly absurd to suppose that the cautious Chrysothemis should have so feelingly described her joy on supposing Orestes to be in the country, or that the equally cautious Orestes should have discovered himself, to Electra, both of them knowing and fearing the enflamed state of their sister's temper, in a public square, before the house of Egisthus. It is almost equally improbable that Clytemnestra and Electra

Deducta 'st, non ut, solenni more sacrorum
Perfecto, posset claro comitari Hymenæo :
Sed casta inceste, nubendi tempore in ipso,
Hostia concideret mactatu mæsta parentis,
Exitus ut classi felix, faustusque daretur.

should abuse each other there. Indeed all dramatic experience proves that an extreme adherence to the unities is as much to be avoided as an entire rejection of them. In the play before us the resource adopted by the author of a rebuking tutor will scarcely be allowed to remove the difficulties in which a too rigid law has involved him.

Electra, on discovering in the tutor the person to whom she had formerly entrusted Orestes, notwithstanding her brother's obtrusive and provoking prudence, breaks out in a noble strain of feeling.

Most lov'd and honor'd friend—the sole preserver
Of Agamemnon's race—art thou the man
Who from our troubles rescued him and me? *Orestes.*

The preceding reproof of Orestes sets the author's want of skill in a most prominent point of view.

μη μ'ελεγκε πλειστού λογοῖς.

In plain prose—"ask me no more questions." Certainly the principal danger in the composition of this tragedy was that Electra would appear much too masculine. So far however from managing this defect, the author seems to play with it and exaggerate it, for just as the reader is about to lose all memory of her too manly

zeal in admiration of her feeling and eloquence, either the Chorus; or Orestes, or Chrysothemis, utter some pointed rebuke to remind her and the world that she is too fond of talking. Thus the poet becomes his own critic, and with equal singularity and severity, accompanies his creation with his censure. The tutor here answers the persecuted Electra with an injunction of silence (really it is difficult to say who are the friends, and who the enemies of the lady) and then proceeds to mention, that Clytemnestra being alone in the house, the moment of acting is arrived. Orestes most promptly understands the hint, turns to Pylades, whose name now for the first time appears, and repeats to this speechless friend (still sneering I imagine at Electra) what the tutor has before said, that there is no time for words. The two heroes rush into the house, leaving Electra to address Apollo, and the Chorus to observe upon the blood-breathing progress of Mars and the inevitable dogs, the avengers of monstrous crimes, in language sufficiently elevated. Electra at length (for what a purpose!) enjoins silence herself, and immediately the groans and exclamations of

the dying Clytemnestra are heard from within. Electra is overjoyed.

Cly. Oh—what a wound was that!

El. Strike—strike a second.

Cly. Again?

El. Oh that Egisthus too was there!

Orestes returns, congratulating himself upon having done well, if Apollo's oracles are to be believed. Then immediately Egisthus is seen by the Chorus. He enters. Orestes and he commence a conversation which very soon wearies Electra, whose love of talking is now indeed completely subdued, and who desires her brother to put an end to it. Then follows a dialogue whimsical enough, in which Orestes commands Egisthus to go to the place where he slew his father, that he may die there, and they contend with all politeness which is to go first. The play ends with a general moral observation from Orestes, and one from the Chorus, on the misfortunes of the house of Atreus.

We must say then, that in the play of Electra, if there are every where most striking felicities and beauties, and of that peculiar class which makes the critic almost ashamed to dwell upon errors, there are many great defects: that the author

has most unnecessarily exhibited in a woman, passions and feelings totally foreign to her sex, transforming his men into women, and his women into men; that it is no vindication to call the character of Electra natural, because she has evidently quarrelled with her mother subsequently to her father's death; for the admission of any inferior feeling of this nature, as far as it goes, destroys the interest she is intended to create; that allowing the story* at that time current in Greece to have given the chief agency to Electra, will not justify the author, for this circumstance would have sufficiently appeared in her having saved her brother at first, as mentioned in the narration; that even granting him his plot, he has managed it unskilfully, and has frequently increased his difficulties; that Orestes is little more than an executioner; that appearing so he excites no interest; and that for this reason the groans of the dying

* Was the story of this nature? The authority of Homer is against such a supposition. In the 3rd and 4th books of the *Odyssey*, Nestor and Menelaus in their respective conversations with Telemachus, give the sole credit of the vengeance upon *Egisthus* and *Clytemnestra* to Orestes.

Clytemnestra are heard with pity rather than triumph; that we consign Orestes to the furies with more satisfaction than his mother to the grave, an effect precisely contrary to that intended by the author.*

* In the Electra of Euripides one of the errors I have mentioned, as appearing to me in the play of Sophocles, is avoided. The scene is not laid before the gates of the palace, and the contrivance of the marriage between Electra and a common labourer is, I think, happy. His respect for her, though perhaps carried to a length rather ludicrous, is also happy. But the other leading fault in Sophocles is terribly increased—I mean that of the unexampled and unnecessary ferocity of the heroine. Euripides has made her less enthusiastic and more disposed to complain of her own misfortunes. The stratagem by which she gets her mother into her power, obtaining a visit from her by sending her word that she has been brought to bed of a child, is totally indefensible. Clytemnestra comes and endeavours to effect a reconciliation by stating at length the grievances she had suffered from Agamemnon, and by promises to Electra of better treatment, and then with a view of performing the necessary sacrifices on the safe delivery of her daughter, at the urgent and repeated request of the latter, enters the house, where her son is in wait for her. Electra follows, and together with Orestes, perpetrates the murder. This action is the more inexcusable, as it is performed, because we learn in a former part of the play, that Clytemnestra had actually saved her daughter's life from the more sanguinary and safer policy of Ægisthus. Indeed the Electra of Euripides is a cold, vindictive, tricking woman, and it requires a high respect for the vast merits of this

In observing upon the Semiramis of Crebillon, the first remark that occurs is equally applicable to the play of Voltaire under the same title. So far from preserv-

author, his close-knit vigour, his sublimity, and his pathos, not to be sometimes extremely disgusted in the course of the play, particularly where she stimulates Orestes, shrinking from the murder of her “ who brought him forth and nourished him,” (line 975) and also where she triumphs over her mother on following her into the house. (line 1145, &c.) I am surprised that these things should have been endured by an Athenian audience, as no people had a higher sense of the filial obligations than the Athenians. There are two scenes in this play to which we may produce similar ones from our English authors, Milton and Shakespeare. In Milton probably there was a direct imitation. Shakespeare is like Euripides only because they both copied nature. Orestes being gone to put Ægisthus to death in the midst of a public sacrifice, the chorus suddenly breaks out with these words.

Eα εα·

φιλατι, Εονς ηκυσατ'; η δοκω κενη

υπηλθε μ' αγε νερτιεα Βροντη διος; l. 751. &c.

Heard ye that noise my friends? or is it fancy
That brings upon me the infernal thunder?

Compare the whole of this noble scene to line 884 inclusively, with that in Samson Agonistes, where old Manah is interrupted in his conversation with the chorus by the sounds attending the death of his son.

Oh! what noise?

Mercy of heaven! what hideous shout was that?
And continue the comparison from line 1508 to line

ing the unity of action, they exhibit two passions with almost equal force in their respective tragedies; the love of a mother for her unknown son, and the desire of vengeance, by Crebillon ascribed to the brother-in-law, by Voltaire to the son, on the murderers and dethroners of her late royal husband. Whether the first of these passions is fitted for the foundation of a tragedy, except with some of the circumstances of horror added by Lord Orford, may perhaps be doubted. At all events, it must surely be granted, that the latter should not be displayed as subordinate to it, and merely as an under-plot, nor is it to be endured, that the feelings, whatever they may be, which are supposed to arise

1707. The second comparison I would make is between the scene in which Orestès and Electra converse upon coming forth from the house after the death of Clytemnestra, and that where Macbeth and Lady Macbeth appear immediately upon the murder of Duncan. The similarity is not so exact as in the former case, but the heroes resemble each other entirely in dwelling upon the dreadful circumstances of the past transaction, notwithstanding the interruptions of their female companions. Euripides is correct, affecting, and impressive throughout; (though I think Electra repents much too soon) Shakespeare runs riot a little in his description of sleep.

in the breast of the auditor or reader on perceiving a mother fall in love with her son *unknown*, should be laboriously spread through five acts by the aid and submission of the sentiment so much more dignified and tragic, attributed to the son on finding himself the rightful king, or to the next and nearly related heir of the murdered monarch. These authors, however, not content with the materials thus supplied them, elevate a third subject, the distress arising from the mutual attachment of the son and a young princess, to an importance equal to that of the two before mentioned. In Crebillon's play particularly, Tenesis is at least as much the heroine of the piece as Semiramis; and in Voltaire's, Azema plays no very subordinate part. For the rest, the usual merits of the French tragedy, which the great literary lawgiver of France too partially extends into general laws, when he observes,* "les deux grandes regles sont que les personnages interessent, et que les vers soient bons," are exhibited by Crebillon to a considerable extent. The last of these rules is indeed very powerfully displayed, particularly in the scene of the second act, where Belus and Agenor sup-

* See Voltaire. Fragment d'un discours sur Don Pedre.

port their relative claims, one to the dignity of birth, the other to that of virtue. The catastrophe in the play of Crebillon is extremely well managed. Semiramis dies by her own hand, under the influence of feelings natural to her as a woman, and becoming to her as a queen. Of the Semiramis of Voltaire to which I am so much indebted, I may speak freely, because he himself has set the example in a criticism upon Hamlet, which certainly would have become him better had his obligations to the immortal author of that extraordinary production been less numerous. The Semiramis of Voltaire is a great and accomplished queen, of matchless beauty, and with mental qualifications which eminently fit her for the government of a great empire. Fifteen years before the action of the play commences, she employed means to poison her husband Ninus, who, had he not been anticipated, would have destroyed her. Her reign has been a reign of virtue and utility—the uncultivated desert she has made fertile—barbarians she has subjugated to her laws—the arts at her command have appeared in monuments, which are the admiration of the universe—she is followed by the blessings, and surrounded by the acclamations of her people. Notwith-

standing these merits, these rewards, and this length of time, she appears before us absolutely crushed by her remorse.

*“ Tantôt remplissant l’air de ses lugubres cris,
Tantôt morne, abattue, égarée, interdite,
De quelque Dieu vengeur évitant la poursuite,
Elle tombe à genoux vers ces lieux retirés,
A la nuit, au silence, à la mort consacrés,
Sejour où nul mortel n’osa jamais descendre,
Où de Ninus, mon maître, on conserve la cendre;
Elle approche à pas lents, l’air sombre, intimidé,
Et se frappant le sein de ses pleurs inondé,
A travers les horreurs d’un silence farouche,
Les noms de fils, d’époux, échappent de sa bouche,
Elle invoque les dieux ; mais les dieux irrités
Ont corrompu le cours de ses prosperités ”*

After these sublime and affecting lines, the course of the play is truly astonishing. The son of Ninus, who, at the time of his father’s death escaped not from the fury of Semiramis, (for she seems to have always been a most tender and affectionate mother,) but that of Assur, her guilty instrument, having under a fictitious name and character attracted the affection of the queen by his valour in distant places, in obedience to her orders comes to Babylon. Here, as she flatters herself, having long subdued every youthful passion and feeling, in compliance with the oracles of Egypt, and the supposed

wishes of the shade of Nimus, supported by a laudable desire to dismiss and defend herself against the criminal Assur, having found how inefficient in procuring happiness had been the glory, pomp, labours, and blessings of empire, she determines to divide with him her throne and bed. A council is held, and she declares her purpose; when suddenly the ghost of Ninus appears, not to denounce the vengeance of heaven on the incestuous bond, not to reveal any unknown truth, not to clear up any mystery, but rather, as it seems, and as Semiramis herself supposes, to celebrate the marriage by his approving presence, to darken and confound whatever was dark and confused before, and in a short speech of four or five lines, to appoint a meeting with his son in his tomb. The marriage proceeds, till by mortal means the unfortunate queen discovers that the youth, on whom she has fixed her affections, is her son. On this discovery she resigns both her love and her crown, and afterwards, when she hears that Assur has formed the design of following her son into the tomb in order to destroy him there, she too descends into this abode of death and horror, for the purpose of saving him. What

passed there for the fame of our author were better concealed. The vindictive ghost plays off illusions before the eyes of the son, till fancying that he is stabbing Assur, he plunges his dagger into the bosom of Semiramis. He then drags his victim through the dust, sobbing in death, and unable to articulate her lamentations; till struck by a sudden sensation of horror, and still ignorant who it is he has slain, he bursts from the tomb. The dreadful truth is at last revealed by the bleeding Semiramis coming forth and breathing her last at its entrance. Thus then are the laws of nature suspended and interrupted, thus is the sacred repose of the grave violated, for the sole purpose of forcing upon the struggling conscience of the noble and virtuous Ninias, the murder of his mother; that mother, who, before she knew him, offered him her affection and her crown; who on the discovery of his birth had subdued her love, but still displayed the tenderness of a mother in the resignation of her throne. As for the trick, the pantomime, the harlequinade performed in the recesses of his tomb by the ghost of Ninus, by which his son is for ever consigned to misery and remorse amidst the splendors of empire, its child-

ishness is almost equal to its horror; and we may venture to assert, without incurring the danger of being accused of partiality towards our own illustrious dramatist, that in his early age, without any models to work by, left to the resources of a mind in a great degree uncultivated, he has exhibited no where a greater error in taste, judgment, or morality, Did Semiramis deserve death, her son should not have struck the blow—if heaven, after fifteen years of remorse and virtue, was still unsatisfied, its agent should have executed its own purpose—the yawning tomb might have closed for ever over the unfortunate queen, and consigned her to those embraces she had such good reason to detest. As the play stands, we perceive clearly that Semiramis acted only in self-defence, when she destroyed a husband, whose hatred was so strong that not the grave could subdue it—whose vindictive wrath no lengthened penitence, no splendid virtue could soften or appease; who was indeed so fond of blood, as to choose rather to condemn his son to misery, than to suffer his afflicted wife still to dispense blessings over an applauding people.

These observations naturally lead the at-

tention to the Hamlet of Shakespeare. The original conception of this play in the mind of it's author, was, I doubt not, as sublime, as was ever formed by man, and though in it's execution it is soiled and degraded by the errors of his age, and equally by his characteristic carelessness, yet does he, with all his imperfections on his head, through beauty and deformity, through success and failure, through wrong and right, accomplish his purpose; nor is there an auditor or reader at the conclusion, who refuses to accompany Horatio in his tears and panegyric on the departed prince. All execrate the murderer of his father, all rejoice in the death of the usurper, all acknowledge the stroke given by Hamlet to be the stroke of justice, all feel that it has only been too long delayed, all lament the unmerited fate of the avenging monarch. The character of Hamlet, though drawn with disastrous negligence, is singularly interesting and imposing. Great talents, splendid accomplishments, a love of literature, a deep knowledge of the world, a high degree of personal resolution and bravery, a contemplative and philosophic cast of mind, an ardent patriotism, are the qualities by which he commands our admiration. As a man, anxious to surrender,

in his intercourse with his friend, every feeling his princely dignity might suggest to himself or others; a warm, though not perhaps a very consistent lover, a most devoted and revering son, more disposed to mourn or correct than to punish a too guilty mother, he has almost equal claims on our affection. The general dialogue between Hamlet and Horatio is incomparable and inimitable; that between Hamlet and his father's ghost equally excellent. It is in this latter representation that Shakespeare has many rivals, and it is here, for that reason perhaps, his superiority is the most strikingly manifested. I have in my recollection two Greek ghosts, a French ghost, and an Italian ghost; and as the spirit of Hamlet's father flies before the first glimpse of morning, so most assuredly do all these foreign visions disappear before the "buried majesty of Denmark," as obedient to the magic and incantations of Shakespeare. In the Hecuba of Euripides, the shade of Polydorus rises, in order to request his mother to bury the body that once belonged to him. In the Persians of Eschylus, that of Darius deepens the tragic scene by his lamentations. Voltaire raises a ghost to expose himself in the man-

ner already described ; and the Italian ghost in the opera of Semiramide, is not ashamed to imitate the French apparition, with this difference indeed, that not daring to trust himself with recitative, he maintains a most prudent and judicious silence. The ghost of Hamlet's father breaks the fetters of the tomb, for a most solemn and important end, which could have been answered by no other means than this dreadful interruption of the laws of nature. The spirit of a king is in arms, and we feel that all is not well. When the awful vision speaks, we are alarmed at the slightest hint of the secrets of the prison house, and we rejoice that the eternal blazon must not be to ears of flesh and blood. The ghost of Hamlet's father wages no war with women, but conjures his son to leave his guilty queen to her conscience and to heaven. He deems the time spent in reproving her, as lost and unprofitable, even the "speaking daggers" he disapproves, and takes this opportunity of appearing, to inflame his son against the murderous usurper. It is superfluous to dwell longer upon the merits of Shakespeare in this part of his play, or where his excellencies are more mixed, and less clear, to point out the splendid

beauties which more than redeem his errors; but it is pleasing to endeavour to vindicate his sovereignty against those, who in hostile terms, have rebelliously challenged him to the combat with his own weapons. We must confess, however, that the enumeration of the faults of Hamlet, in Voltaire's criticism, however exaggerated, unbecoming, and ungrateful in the style, is not altogether unjust; and I shall quote the passage as tending to shew the errors, which an author treating the same subject, had to avoid. After some remarks sufficiently cold and formal, upon the numerous beauties of this tragedy, he becomes thus lively as soon as he approaches its defects. " C'est une piece grossiere et barbare, qui ne serait-pas supportée par la plus vile populace de la France, et de l'Italie. Hamlet y devient fou au second acte, & sa maitresse devient folle au troisieme; le prince tue le pere de sa maitresse feignant de tuer un rat, et l'heroine se jette dans la riviere. On fait sa fosse sur le theatre, des fossoyeurs disent des quolibets dignes d'eux, en tenant dans leurs mains des têtes de morts, le prince Hamlet repond a leurs grossieretés abominables par des folies non moins degoûtantes.

Pendant ce temps là un des acteurs fait la conquête de la Pologne. Hamlet, sa mere et son beau-pere boivent ensemble sur le théâtre : on chante a table, on s'y querelle, on se bat, on se tue : on croirait que cet ouvrage est le fruit de l'imagination d'un sauvage ivre." I give this passage to the indignation of the reader, only remarking, that if Shakespeare has absurdly, extravagantly, and often unnecessarily violated in almost all his plays, the unities of time and place, in the play before us, the unity of action, which is best explained to mean the exhibition of one ruling passion, all other parts and feelings being subordinate and tributary to it, is more faithfully preserved in Hamlet than in Semiramis, and perhaps generally speaking, by Shakespeare* than

* In the plays of Hamlet, Othello, Coriolanus, Richard 3rd., and Romeo and Juliet, the unity of action is very well preserved. This fact is sufficiently proved by the circumstance, that in the representation, those parts which most violate this unity are omitted, without its being necessary to join the remaining parts by any additional lines. They fall off from the body of the play, as if they had been originally written by some inferior hand, or in complaisance to the taste of the times when the author lived. Clouds hang round the genius of Shakespeare, originating in a very distant quarter of the heavens, and from causes over which he has no controul, nor can any splendor or heat entirely disperse them.

Voltaire. Upon the relative importance of each of these unities, the two nations seem to be at issue. Shakespeare has taught us to think passion and character more essential to tragedy, than powerful and comprehensive discussion in harmonious verification.

In leaving Voltaire, I must take occasion to remark upon an error of no inconsiderable magnitude in the dedication of his "Brutus" to Lord Bolingbroke. He there observes, that the passion of love should never be exhibited in a tragedy, but as the ground-work, or leading sentiment, or ruling intrigue of the piece. These are his words. "Pour que l'amour soit digne du theatre tragique, il faut qu'il soit le nœud necessaire de la piece, et non qu'il soit amené par force pour remplir le vide de vos tragedies et des n' tres qui sont toutes trop longues; il faut que ce soit une passion véritablement tragique regardée comme une faiblesse, et combattue par des remords. Il faut ou que l'amour conduise aux malheurs et aux crimes pour faire-voir combien il est dangereux; ou que la vertu en triomphe pour montrer qu'il n'est pas invincible: sans cela ce n'est plus qu'un amour d'eglogue ou de comedie." It may be answered, that because the passion of love is not the ruling

intrigue of a piece, it does not follow that it is forced into the play for no purpose but to increase its length. The other observation contained in this passage, that unless it leads to crime and misfortune, or is triumphed over by virtue, it is nothing more than the love of eclogue or comedy, is at least equally unjust. Indeed, on the contrary, it may be asserted, that an author who makes this passion the ground-work of his piece, is far more likely to run into a dialogue fit only for eclogue or comedy, than he who merely introduces it for the illustration of character, or of a higher and more dignified feeling. When you have to spread the conversation of lovers through five acts, it must be impossible to avoid being either insipid or bombastic. Accordingly we see the best authors have failed in this attempt, Shakespeare in his Romeo and Juliet, Dryden in his Antony and Cleopatra, and other plays, Voltaire in his Zara,* Mr. Mason in his Elfrida.

* I suspect, that if the following lines had not been written by the author of Zaire, Voltaire would have condemned them to eclogue or comedy.

Orosmane. *Paraissez, tout est prêt et l'ardeur qui m'anime
Ne souffre plus, Madame, aucun retardement ;
Les flambeaux de l'hymen brillent pour votre amant ;
Les parfums de l'encens remplissent la mosquée ;*

The ancients were so aware of the difficulty here mentioned, that they have left us no play of the nature under discussion. The truth seems to be, that all absolute and extreme injunctions of this sort are false, inapplicable and dangerous; nor shall we yield to a rule, tending to exclude from our tragedies all the sacred names, which by the universal consent of mankind, have been followed with most admiration and interest; to banish and proscribe a Hector, a Julius Cæsar, a Henry the Fourth of France, and to substitute in their places an Ajax, or a Cato, a Catiline, or a Borgia. It surely cannot be necessary that a man should be mad in order to be amiable. In

*Du dieu de Mahomet la puissance invoquée
 Confirme mes sermens, et preside a mes feux.
 Mon peuple consterné pour vous offre ses vœux,
 Tout tombe a vos genoux : vos superbes rivales,
 Qui disputaient mon cœur & marchaient vos égales,
 Heureuses de vous suivre et de vous obeir,
 Devant vos volontés vont apprendre à flétrir.
 Le trône, les festins et la ceremonie,
 Tout est prêt : commencez le bonheur de ma vie.*

Za. Ou suis Je, malheureux ! ô tendresse ! ô douleur !

Oros. Venez.

Za. Où me cacher ?

Oros. Que dites vous ?

Za. Seigneur !

Oros. DONNEZ-MOI VOTRE MAIN ; daignez, belle

Zaire . . . &c.

exhibiting on the stage the fall of Hector and the house of Priam, must we be careful not to display the hero's affection for Andromache, because he is not dying at her feet; must Cæsar be represented as incapable of loving, as he does not sacrifice a world to his affections, must the Fourth Henry of France be on no account allowed to offer his crown to the fair Gabrielle, because his courage is not enervated nor his honor degraded in her arms. Is not the recorded letter of that most amiable of heroes more truly sublime and affecting than all the love-sick despair that poets ever described, and would not an author be insane to introduce him on the stage without representing the sentiment displayed in it? "Si je suis vaincu," he writes before the battle of Ivry, "vous me connaissez assez pour croire que je ne fuirai pas; mais ma dernière pensée sera à dieu, et l'avant dernière à vous." I will take the opportunity of quoting the verses of the same monarch, in which he expresses his feelings in lines which shew the hero, the monarch, and the lover, doing his best to please his mistress with a little poetry, and which he afterwards still farther embellished by simple and affecting music.

" Charmante Gabrielle
 Parée de mille dards,
 Quand la gloire m' appelle
 Sous les drapeaux de Mars !
 Cruelle départie
 Malheureux jour !
 Que ne suis-je sans vie
 Ou sans amour !
 Recevez ma couronne
 Le prix de ma valeur :
 Je la tiens de Bellone,
 Tenez la de mon cœur :
 Cruelle départie, &c. &c.

Assuredly if such a hero were exhibited in some brilliant action, without any reference to his affection for individuals of the other sex, a most severe injustice would be done him, and one, which he himself, could he see what is passing on earth, would be most disposed to resent ; and yet is not such an hero pre-eminently fitted for tragic celebration ? If you wish then to display character faithfully, if you would perpetuate the memory of men whose dispositions are most worthy imitation and applause, if you would employ the theatre for any higher purpose than to immortalize the madness of lovers or the ferocity of conquerors, you must not only *not* reject the passion of love from a subordinate share in your tragic action, but you must positively

introduce it for this express purpose. Voltaire has been whimsically erroneous on this subject. In his play of "Catiline," whose character, as drawn by Sallust, is totally inconsistent with the feelings of a sincere and honorable attachment, either as a friend or a lover, he has introduced Arelia obtaining and possessing such an attachment from him, and this too in scenes forced into the play with great awkwardness, while from his "Death of Cæsar," of a man, who never in his life was free from the influence of love, he has excluded women altogether. Voltaire differs from most other men—his example is better than his precept.—He has corrected his play of Mariamne, which failed on the stage on account of its too great ferocity, winning from pity what he had not been able to force from terror.—He has written many admirable tragedies of five acts, in which the passion of love is subordinate to his leading sentiment—that in which he displays his own law is spun out to tedious length in three.

From such remarks may be seen the faults, which, it appeared to me, in choosing the subject of my second tragedy, I had most strenuously to avoid. I feel however, that if I have not exhibited all

the errors of my illustrious predecessors, I have fallen very far short of their excellencies. I have not ventured into the other world, not only because the introduction of ghosts in these days, when men are more disposed to laugh at established facts than to receive doubtful ones, even with the modern aid of flying drapery and subterraneous fire, is not likely to be impressive or commanding, but also (to apply the words of a great author on a different occasion) because the success of Shakespeare and the failure of Voltaire are equally alarming. In giving either of my tragedies to the world, all I can hope is, that on subjects which appear to me singularly formed for tragedy, I have added one step (it may be at the bottom of the present flight) to the elevation from which some future author may commence labours more acknowledged and more successful.

I have not offered these plays to the theatre. My reason has been, that I should feel entirely satisfied with the approbation denoted by a tolerable sale, while in case of failure, for which I am prepared, I should prefer neglect, or the silent sneer of a reader, to the loud condemnation of an assembled public. I write, because in the progress of composition I am amused and

instructed, I publish with the hope of finding some readers similarly constituted with myself, who will read, not without indulgence, what I have written with pleasure. As we advance in years, indeed, such motives are diminished, for he must be fortunate indeed, from whom many of those he most wished to please, have not been torn away by death; but the love of fame takes place of affection, and the force of habit continues what commenced in the more lively and better feelings of youth. The lamentations of authors over their gratuitous labours are either disgusting or contemptible, nor are their angry disappointments more worthy our sympathy. "I perceive plainly," says the querulous and indignant Cowley, in his preface to the Cutter of Coleman-street, "by daily experience, that fortune is mistress of the theatre, as Tully says it is of all popular assemblies. No man can tell sometimes from whence the invisible winds rise that move them. There are a multitude of people who are truly and only spectators at a play, without any use of their understandings, and these carry it sometimes by the strength of their numbers. There are others who use their understandings too."

much; who think it a sign of weakness and stupidity to let any thing pass by them unattacked, and that the honor of their judgments (as some brutals imagine of their courage) consists in quarrelling with every thing. We are therefore wonderful wise men, and have a fine business of it, we who spend our time in poetry. I do sometimes laugh, and am often angry with myself when I think on it; and if I had a son inclined by nature to the same folly, I believe I should bind him from it by the strictest conjurations of a paternal blessing. For what can be more ridiculous, than to labour to give men delight, whilst they labour on their part more earnestly to take offence. To expose oneself voluntarily and frankly to all the dangers of that narrow passage to unprofitable fame, which is defended by rude multitudes of the ignorant and armed troops of the malicious. If we do ill, many discover it, and all despise us; if we do well, but few men find it out and fewer entertain it kindly. If we commit errors, there is no pardon, if we could do wonders, there would be but little thanks, and that too extorted from unwilling givers." It would be difficult, and not very useful, to examine the motives of an audience on the

night of a new play. They are no doubt sufficiently mixed, yet it must surely be confessed, that he who solicits a trial should bear the verdict with patience; and that those who pay their money upon your promise to amuse them, should be permitted to express their disappointment, particularly when without such an expression, they would have to dread a repetition. The remainder of the passage is the cant of a poetical coquette. The author evidently quarrels with his favorite art, through the abundance of his love for it. For myself, at least, had I a friend inclined to this pursuit, (I speak of poetry in general, including the dramatic, which is next to the epic in dignity, and superior to it in utility) I would exhort him to encourage it by all the means in his power, as softening the stiffened lines of a well regulated mind, by a pure, cheap, and independent amusement; and affording the best consolation in those reverses which wait upon less fortunate tempers. If poets have been sometimes exposed to all the calamities of dissipation and error, it is not because they were poets, but because their passions were uncontrollable or their pursuits mean, and however we may

be inclined to despise or detest those who had it in their power to succour them without great inconvenience to themselves, and yet forebore the exercise of the most liberal of the feelings, yet it cannot be expected, that in their behalf every moral law should be suspended, that error should have no failure and vice no sting. At the same time let us separate the man from his art, in order that a noble employment may suffer no degradation. If Tasso was a prisoner and in poverty, his misfortunes are not to be ascribed to his "Jerusalem Delivered," but to his servile attendance and sycophancy on a court. We lament over his calamities, but had he abounded in wealth or married the daughter of his patron, we should scarcely have rejoiced in a felicity, which would have rewarded the degradation of such uncommon talents. Otway would have died of hunger, if he had not written the "Venice Preserved;" with this difference, that his life would have been far more wretched, and his death unlamented. It was not "The Cotter's Saturday Night," or "The Vision," that condemned Burns to an untimely grave—it was the force of the passions, which are usually soften-

ed rather than enflamed by the labours of the imagination. The profligate may endeavour to shelter themselves from disgrace by the example of men, whose unquestionable talents were accompanied with the most unfortunate irregularities of conduct; and may even dare to extend into a general rule, what is in truth a most unfounded palliation of themselves, but maturer reflexion must force upon them the conviction, that genius is darkened, not inspired, by the influence of the passions; and they will recollect that Virgil and Milton sufficiently prove how entirely compatible the highest efforts of poetry are, even with the polish of a court, or the wide, various, and dignified utility of office. If the path of the poet is narrow and sometimes perilous, the reward of his success is proportionably glorious and lasting. If the poet often encourages a delicacy of feeling which renders him too sensitive to the approbation or disapprobation of the world, in his moments of weariness, when the balance is undecided, in the hour of his distress, when the storm bursts upon him, he has a proud, unbought, independent, magnificent resource, which

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checks his disappointment and supports his benevolence ; which, considered in itself and without any reference to applause or censure, is it's own great incalculable reward.

THE
SCHOOL FOR HUSBANDS.
A COMEDY.

VOL. II.

B

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MELVILLE	. . .	<i>a young man of fortune.</i>
LOVECHILD	. . .	<i>his father-in-law.</i>
DAZZLE	. . .	<i>friend of Melville.</i>
MELLEFONT	. . .	<i>friend of Melville, attached to Emily Lovechild.</i>
SETTLE	. . .	<i>a guest of Melville's.</i>
LOVELL	. . .	<i>a guest of Melville's, engaged to Sophia Woodville.</i>
GIUSEPPE	. . .	<i>servant of Lovell.</i>
MRS. MELVILLE	.	<i>daughter of Lovechild.</i>
EMILY LOVECHILD	.	<i>her sister, attached to Mellefont.</i>
SOPHIA WOODVILLE		<i>engaged to Lovell.</i>
LUCY	. . .	<i>waiting-maid.</i>

SCENE.—*Melville's country-house, near Bath.*

ACT I.—SCENE

A room in Melville's house.

Enter LUCY and GIUSEPPE, meeting.

GIUSEPPE.

AH! mia carissima! ma chere Lucy, how glad I am to see you once again. Ma foi, you look as beautiful as paradise; give me a kiss you little charmer.

Lucy. Lord! Mr. Giuseppe, you are so boist'rous, and before breakfast too! La, I declare, you've put me into such a flutter I shall not be able to pin my mistress's gown.

Gius. Perdonate, mia anima. (*sings*) But, ma foi, your mistress reminds me of my master, he is waiting for me to dress his hair—one more kiss, my dear girl, and then.

Lucy. La! This is monstrous shocking, you shall not take such liberties with me I promise you; it may be the custom in those foreign parts you come from, but English flesh and blood can't bear it.

Gius. Then English flesh and blood must not look so tempting, (*kisses her*) sacre! my master's bell! I know it by its violence—he's

grown so ill-tempered of late, ah ! Lucy, this love—my poor master now never sleeps at night, and looks as pale as spermácti.

Lucy. I am sure if paleness is a proof of love, I know whose complexion tells a very different story, that I do.

Gius. But what made us leave Bath do you think, as soon as you left it ? What made us follow you to Melville house ? Sacre nom de tonnere, my master's bell again !

Lucy. And I must go to my mistress—*going*.

Gius. Signora Lucy !

Lucy. But your master's bell !

Gius. Ah ! ma foi, don't mind him. I would do any thing to serve him, when my own pleasure is not in the way. Come here, I have some questions to ask you—I am sure I must tell him something of his mistress, or else.

Lucy. Indeed I shall not be bid to come here, and go there just as you please—well, what do you want ?

Gius. Tell me, is your mistress, Signora Emily, seriously in love with my master or not ?

Lucy. O Lord no ! I am sure she is not.

Gius. And what makes you so sure, my dear ?

Lucy. Your dear indeed ! marry come up—well, in the first place, if I mention him a thousand times, she never sighs once; then she does not look pale and red at the same time, and when I call her in the morning, she's as light and airy as if she had slept all night long.

Gius. And what does she say of Bath? Does she call it the most charming place in the whole world, as I do, where I first saw these lips. (*kisses her.*)

Lucy. No indeed, she abuses it night and morning, and says its a horrid dull, idle, gossipping place, only fit for children at a dancing school. Then she vows there was not a single person there she ever wishes to see again.

Gius. Oh, my poor master! now I must tell him the exact contrary of all this.

Lucy. No, no, consider, Gentlemen very often suffer cruelly from love.

Gius. That they do, indeed, Lucy.

Lucy. And if you encourage him, who knows if it may not break his heart at last.

Gius. But if I don't encourage him, he'll break my head at present.

Lucy. Good Lord! How I stand idling here! Good by, Mr. Giuseppe.

Gius. Bon jour, my angel.

Lucy. You wont see me again all day, I promise you.

Gius. Sancta Maria! you frighten me out of my senses.

Lucy. Well, I don't wish to encourage you, but, perhaps—perhaps, you have no need to despair.

Exit.

Gius. The dear sweet little coquette! Fort bien, very well, very well. I have a wife in Italy, and a wife in France, and now I am likely

to provide one for myself in England. *Ma foi,*
they are to be had every where.—(*sings*) *Com-*
patiso le donne—compatisco le donne. *Exit.*

SCENE II.—LOVELL's dressing-room.

LOVELL in his dressing-gown.

Lov. This woman's in my head, my heart—she occupies every thought—sleep never comes near me, and if I had been at the gaming table all night, I could not feel more jaded and weary this morning. What's worst of all, this Italian puppy perceives my folly.

Enter GIUSEPPE.

Where have you been loitering, sirrah? Am I to pull my arms off at the bell-rope to rouse you from your lethargy?

Gius. Oh! mon signore—mon voglio offendirvi!—but the bells in this house do not ring I suppose.

Lov. No more of these excuses, I have been making noise enough to raise the dead.

Gius. (Aside) Or to kill the living—*ma foi—ah monsieur!* I did think you would not wish to see me 'till I had made some inquiries.

Lov. Inquiries—what inquiries?

Gius. You must remember, sir, Mademoiselle Lucy.

Lov. No, not I—some vulgar baggage I suppose, some high spirited trollop I'll answer for her.

Gius. (Aside) Ah! ah! je vous sauve—you shall remember her—as charming a young thing as is to be found I assure you, sir, upon my honour.

Lov. Don't poison me with your love-sick praise, don't you see my hair is not dressed.

Gius. I thought, sir, you would not take it amiss if I made some inquiries from her after her mistress. Oh! qu'elle est charmante—monsieur.

Lov. Who gave you liberty to mention that lady, am I for ever to be tormented by this unintelligible chatter—why, you rascal, you've reversed the order of Providence, and made a mixture of all the languages, which, from the building of Babel, were decreed to be kept separate. Was there ever heard such a jargon, well, this shall decide me—I've told you a thousand times I am tired of you—do you mind me —take this for a warning—quit my service—you inattentive, idle, lanthorn-jawed blockhead.

Gius. It grieves me very much to have offended you, sir, upon my honour, very much. But I thought it no harm just to ask how Miss Emily had been since we left Bath.

Lov. You are an impertinent, interfering, busy jackanapes for your pains, and what did the woman say?

Gius. Ah, sir, ma foi, you have made terrible work there. Miss Emily has never looked up since—she never sleeps at night—changes colour a thousand times in a minute—calls Bath the most charming place in the world, and says she shall always think of it with the deepest gratitude. La pauvre petite !

Lov. And who told you this, Joseph ?

Gius. Mon Dieu ! I've been talking with Madame Lucy this last half hour, and about nothing else.

Lov. What ! that pretty little girl I used to see you walking with up Milsom-street—eh, Joseph ?

Gius. And when her mistress first heard you had followed her here, she was so happy—she laughed, and danced, and her eyes did so sparkle.

Lov. Why, you did not see her, Joe ?

Gius. Oh, no, sir, this is all my little Lucy's description.

Lov. Well, come and dress my hair, Joe—this Lucy of your's is a pretty girl i'faith—by the bye, there's that brown coat of mine—it's almost new, but I don't like it, so you may take it.

Gius. And there is the coat you had made for the last birth-day—the silver is tarnished terribly.

Lov. Take it, take it, only dress my hair, and
take my whole wardrobe. *Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A room.*

MRS. MELVILLE and EMILY.

Mrs. Mel. You have heard who arrived last night after we were all in bed.

Emily. Mr. Lovell—indeed I am very sorry for it.

Mrs. Mel. I was sure he would accept Melville's invitation—you'll torment him in spite of yourself—but we'll talk no more of him—he's one of the men that give us poor women the character of coquettes, by construing distant civilities into proofs of love—how did Mellefont take your delay of marriage?

Emily. With the saucy arrogance of a man who thinks himself secure of me.

Mrs. Mel. And with a grave ill-natured speech upon the impropriety of your conduct.

Emily. No, no, now you wrong him, though satirical he is never ill-natured.

Mrs. Mel. Well, upon my word I think he has some right to be offended.

Emily. You quite frighten me with that grave look, but you remember, sister, how positively I

declared, not three months ago, that I would keep these men at a distance. When you was talking of domestic happiness and congenial sentiments. Alas! how little have your hopes been realized!

Mrs. Mel. Pray, Emily, don't be personal.

Emily. I used to laugh at you, and call the whole race cruel, perfidious, ungenerous; of the tiger species—that ought to be caged as such; very well to look at from a distance, but terrible to approach.

Mrs. Mel. And then Mr. Mellefont convinced you I was right.

Emily. I don't know of what he has convinced me, but really ever since I knew him I have been so near the clouds!—in such an indescribable state of heavenly confusion! But, my dear Louisa, how can you imagine I should be very anxious to marry, when I see you unhappy with a man whom we all know to be more affectionate than the rest of his sex taken together. How can I venture, when hope, seemingly so well founded, has been so delusive—you remember the song—

Hope o'er the bridal bed
Suspends his radiant flight,
And whispers joy to come.

Ah, me! how soon he's fled!
How fades his purple light,
'Till all around is gloom.

Mrs. Mel. I own there are moments when

my spirits, great as they are, hardly support me, but it is the report of his ill-usage, so current in the world, that wounds me most; however, the time will come—I know the time will come, when they will envy me as much as now they affect to pity me; in the interval they shall not be gratified with my mournful looks, I am determined—my father!

Enter LOVECHILD.

Lovc. What, in tears, Louisa!—always in tears! this is not be born; the world says true, I perceive—Melville treats you shamefully.

Mrs. Mel. Its a pity your informers can find no better amusement than to pry into family concerns that don't relate to them.

Lovc. The world is censorious enough, heaven knows; but general reports are seldom without foundation; to me they have always been favourable 'till now, and I am too old to bear the change with patience. I don't like to have it said that my daughter suffers from the tyranny or oppression of any man, while I stand by, afraid to interfere. No—I don't like it, and I won't bear it. Now tell me, own to me, are not you a most miserable woman? Emily, is not she a most miserable woman, I say?

Mrs. Mel. Miserable with Melville?

Lovc. I shall separate you from this worthless husband of yours.

Mrs. Mel. I am happier with him, faulty as he sometimes is, than in any other situation you could describe.

Lovac. There's a self-willed piece of romance for you—come, come, this is nonsense, rank stuff, he's rich, and can make you a handsome allowance.

Mrs. Mel. I can hear no more on this subject, even from you.

Lovac. What think you of a thousand a-year, your carriage, your jewels, and a service of plate.

Mrs. Mel. I have no ambition to be buried splendidly.

Lovac. Buried, do you call it—'sdeath, Louisa, you know he drinks hard.

Mrs. Mel. That I deny.

Lovac. Plays deep.

Mrs. Mel. Go on as you please.

Lovac. Stays out all night ; nay, Miss Allost declared the other evening, just at the time too, when a sans-prendre-vole had put her into tolerable humour, she knew he beat you.

Mrs. Mel. Its slander, slander all ! and the falsehood of the report is only equalled by its malice.

Lovac. Well, well, I see there's nothing to be done with you in this temper, but I will not suffer you to be ill-used, to be made a laughing-stock, a by-word ; a subject of jest over the bottle, pity at quadrille—heavens ! when I think

what a pride and comfort you were to me—but I have done ! I have done ! *Exit.*

Mrs. Mel. And did he really mean to separate us—how Melville will laugh when he hears of it.

Emily. Indeed, Louisa, you're a most excellent creature, practising all your life what wiser man can only teach. I protest here's Mr. Mellefont, and with such a frown on his countenance, I would not meet him for the universe. Let us fly. *Exeunt.*

Enter MELLEFONT.

Mellef. I perceive she is afraid of encountering me. Well, well, let me not imitate poor Melville, and make myself the hero of a tragedy.

Enter DAZZLE.

Ah ! Dazzle—I wanted such a good humoured fellow as you. I see you have not lost the spring of your walk.

Daz. There's life in it—there's elegance—youth and vigour in it—eh ?

Mellef. You stay a day with us, I suppose you have brought back from your travels a store of information.

Daz. It is well you spoke in time, for I see the Morning Post has announced my arrival,

and engagements will be pouring in upon me from all quarters.

Mellef. Your old temper—I see, affecting follies you despise.

Daz. And playing the fool for want of a better employment—exactly so, Mellefont—I wish you had been with me in Lincolnshire last week, for of course I paid my first visit to my father—you've no notion how I'm adored there.

Mellef. Why, indeed, it would have been hard upon you, if, after all the pains you have taken to get a little popularity, you had not succeeded upon your father's estate.

Daz. I knew how it would be—so, on Sunday, that I might not attract too much attention, I placed myself peaceably in the family pew before the service began—but my care was of no avail—the eyes of the congregation never wandered a moment, so that I was absolutely put out of countenance. I am not sure the parson did not stammer—and as for the clerk, I could compare him to nobody but Macbeth, “the amen stuck in his throat!”

Mellef. And not being able to bear so much eclat, you are come to repose with your friends here?

Daz. I was obliged to go to Bath, and as Melville lived only four miles off.

Mellef. Bath! and who did you find there?

Daz. Not a soul but Fightwell.

Mellef. I wish you would teach him to be as harmless in his whims as you are. We met him at lady Ruinall's ball last night. I hate these country parties—i'faith, sir, he contrived a quarrel with Melville.

Daz. So he told me, any thing to divert ennui. I travel for employment. I play the fop for employment. Fightwell calls a man out and shoots him for employment. In this projecting age, its a wonder there's no workhouse established in the region of Bond-street. How many good-tempered fellows would be saved from doing mischief—but now you speak of Melville, he is married I find: I'faith, he has put his follies to a violent death.

Mellef. I am afraid they are still on this side the grave.

Daz. What! the marriage between him and Mrs. Melville, was what they call a love-match, and now of course he is distractedly jealous.

Mellef. No, no, his conduct to her cannot be ascribed to jealousy. I don't know what to call it—I believe he likes to quarrel with her for the pleasure of a reconciliation; or rather, like most men of his temperament, he has his hot and his cold fits; sometimes he loves her to distraction, but as extremes never last, a moment of indifference succeeds, when he fancies an injury from her who is incapable of offering it, and, alas! too often avenges himself by a real one.

Daz. Still, still, for want of employment—yet, on my life for it, he is jealous—did she ever give him cause. Fightwell talks much of her.

Mellef. Fightwell! a vain coxcomb, don't trust him. No, no, as to any infidelity to Melville, she is as guiltless as a vestal, and she loves him with her whole soul; yet, when he is in one of his whimsical moods, he's never at a loss for an accusation.

Daz. He must be ingenious. How does he manage it.

Mellef. It is hard to describe a conduct to which no common language will apply—if you asked me to mention Mrs. Melville's defects, I should profess to you I knew none—she has an unobtrusive gentleness of nature, which it seems you must seek to know, and at the same time a warmth of affection equal to that of her irregular husband.

Daz. Upon my soul I came over to England intending to make some sweet creature happy before I had been here a month—but I fancy Melville's example will cool the ardour of my benevolence.

Mellef. You can draw no conclusion from him. He is an unique; one of those compositions, in forming which nature seems undecided, whether to make him all that is admirable, or all that is abominable: an unharmonized picture, where magnificent traits of light are set off with a sort of disastrous brilliancy, by neigh-

bouring blots of darkness. To describe him most favourably, a genius perpetually rushing into errors, which, at the same time, he arrays so gorgeously, that we know not whether to lament or admire them. Gifted by heaven with every imaginable resource, whether for ornament or utility, yet throwing such a dangerous force into each, that you would imagine his existence to depend upon one alone—like the madman in the play, whose madness is superior to the sobriety of the remaining characters.

Daz. Heavens ! Mellefont, I never knew you so talkative before, we shall never be friends again : —the earth cannot bear two suns, you know.

Mellef. Nay, nay, I'll not contest the matter with you again ; but there is something so extraordinary in this Melville, so much to hope and yet so much to fear ; he seems so much on the balance between the extremities of good and ill.

Daz. That it is impossible not to follow him with more than common interest.

Mellef. Just so — brave, generous, disinterested, affectionate ; yet so much the creature of impulse and passion, that his good and great qualities lose all their effect, and while he hazards the hopes and satisfaction of his friends, he fixes on himself the suspicion of hypocrisy amongst his enemies.

Daz. Yet if he retains any thing of his former

self, never was any man so distant from that detestable vice.

Mellef. Most true—too proud to attempt the concealment of any part of his character, he seems to challenge notice as a mere object of criticism; and thus stands exposed before the world, who observing his variable nature, pursue him with corresponding emotions of hatred or affection, admiration or sorrow.

Daz. You have described him in your old way—with justice I do not doubt—but let us go in search of him—I suppose I must congratulate him on his marriage.

Exeunt.

Enter MRS. MELVILLE.

Mrs. Mel. Where can Melville be? He was not with Mellefont and Mr. Dazzle. He parted with me in anger last night, yet for what cause I know not. Oh! when will the period arrive, the object of so many hopes, of so many prayers, of so many tears, when I may confide without dismay in the steadiness of his affection, in the resolution of his virtues?

Enter MELVILLE.

Mrs. Mel. I was just thinking of you.

Mel. And I have been wishing to speak with you.

Mrs. Mel. How glad then am I to have found you !

Mel. I should have mentioned my objections indeed last night, if we had not returned home from that vile ball so abominably late. Why, why in heaven's name, will you attach yourself to the set you know I detest. Can't you be satisfied with them in town ; must you follow them in the country ?

Mrs. Mel. Follow them ? You know they were at Bath, and accepted lady Ruinall's invitation—how could I avoid meeting them ?

Mel. And you must have that puppy Fightwell for your beau too, the very man you know I dislike above all others.

Mrs. Mel. I never heard you express your dislike.

Mel. And can my meaning be discovered by words alone—there was a time when you anticipated my wishes, and even my thoughts.

Mrs. Mel. Alas ! how can I anticipate your wishes when I scarcely ever see you, and on whose arm shall I lean for support in crouds, if you refuse me yours—you know in your absence all my pleasure is but affected.

Mel. Really ?

Mrs. Mel. Can you doubt it ?

Mel. Ah ! you women are so skilful in ensnaring our affections, and when you once have us in your toils, you tear and mangle us so unmercifully ; to believe you, to trust you, to con-

fide in you, is to take the transient blaze of the meteor for the steady warmth and radiance of the sun—we follow you as if your steps led to eternal life, and light, and joy—then on a sudden we find ourselves tossed about by inexplicable caprices, and—

Mrs. Mel. Stop, Melville, stop, let me save you from remorse, let me do you a real service, at least in one instance, by depriving you of the opportunity of insulting me. *Exit.*

Mel. There's a flight of pride! there's your pomp of passion! there's your magnificence of anger! there's your parade and formality of married authority! What an ideot a man is that marries! All other tyranny is freedom to the marriage state—in other despotisms the blow is directed clumsily from a distance, and as often miscarries as succeeds—but the refined, pointed, inspecting oppression of a wife, no defence can protect you from.

Enter MELLEFONT and DAZZLE.

Mellef. Where in such a hurry, Melville? here's your old friend Dazzle.

Mel. Ah! I am heartily glad to see him, most heartily. (*Shaking him by the hand.*)

Mellef. So, Melville, you had a quarrel with Fightwell last night.

Daz. I assure you I was very near being the

bearer of a challenge, this morning, and indeed I am afraid it will follow close upon my heels.

Mel. It is well—it is perfectly well—then all will be accomplished.

Mellef. What are you thinking of.

Mel. Oh, yes, you were speaking of Fight-well, yes—I met him in the crowd at the ball, where, after we had been pushing against each other for some time, he gave me a kick on the leg, so without ceremony I pulled him by the nose.

Enter SERVANT with a note to DAZZLE.

Daz. As I expected, here's a note for you, Melville, enclosed.

Mellef. But you won't meet him?

Mel. Why not?

Mellef. Do you know what sort of a fellow he is?

Mel. Who does not know him? one with high spirits, supported by the idea of his skill in the art of duelling, which in his imagination makes all the world afraid of him—rude and impertinent by disposition, and encouraged by long impunity.

Daz. Yet, upon my soul, he is not ill-natured.

Mellef. Oh, no, he would not shed the blood of any man, except from mere vanity—but are not you afraid of him Charles?

Mel. Afraid? not I, I am too young to despise the opinion of the world, and as for my life, it is so clouded, where I expected nothing but sunshine—

Mellef. Pshaw!—pshaw!—man.

Mel. Poisoned so near its source, that no accidental stream can purify it—and how muddy and thick it will be when it has run on for some years more, I tremble to think.

Daz. What answer shall I give to Fightwell? he is now at the village, at your park-gate.

Mel. Why tell him I'll meet him an hour hence, under the old ruin.

Mellef. Melville, let me conclude your message, I know your antagonist perfectly.

Mel. As you please, I have no great skill in these affairs.

Mellef. Then, Dazzle, tell your friend we must have none of his long shots. Melville shall have an equal chance, by the conditions of the combat—they must fight across a hand-kerchief.

Daz. Are you serious?

Mellef. Perfectly, I am not surprized at this challenge, and I have long considered the measures which ought be taken with such a man.

Daz. But what say you Melville?

Mel. I leave the whole business to Mellefont—I would not disappoint him in his wishes to describe me on my tomb-stone.

Daz. Well—then I'll go and inform Fightwell of your determination.

Mellef. Don't forget the handkerchief. (*Nodding significantly.*)

Daz. Oh no, depend upon me. *Exit.*

Mellef. I'll be your second, Charles.

Mel. No, no, your life is too valuable to be sported with. Think of poor Emily. I'll go in search of Settle ; his cursed coolness fits him for the office exactly. *Exeunt.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.—SCENE I.

The Park.

Enter MELLEFONT and SETTLE.

Sett. Its true, I assure you.

Mellef. Impossible.

Sett. Its too much trouble to contradict you.

Mellef. Well, well, how was it ?

Sett. He was speaking to me about his duel, but he had not finished his story, before the girl I told you of came tripping up to him—just as she was going to open her lips, he sealed them with a kiss, and after a little of his nonsensical love eloquence, led her by the hand to the cottage by the side of the water.

Mellef. But did not she resist?

Sett. No, indeed, she was collected as I should have been, if instead of being ravished, she had attempted to ravish me; she seemed too proud to oppose him, but pray ask me no more, here he is himself, let him answer.

Enter MELVILLE.

Mel. This was a most fortunate accident,
Settle.

Mellef. Considering the use you are going to make of it, I can't agree with you.

Mel. What, to have a fine girl thrown into your arms without the trouble of searching for her—just to step from your door and be welcomed by such beauty—our inimitable dramatist himself could hardly do her justice—“cheeks deeply blushing at the insinuations of her tell-tale eyes—lips smiling at their own discretion, or if not smiling, more sweetly pouting”—you remember it, Settle?

Sett. Not I, I never attend to such inflammatory descriptions.

Mellef. Really, Melville, just at this moment I should think you might find another employment for your thoughts.

Mel. I can never run on in any path, if a fine woman happens to cross it—I must follow her, though my life depends upon my speed in the other direction.

Mellef. But, Mrs. Melville.

Mel. She has offended me, she knows she has offended me, and if this dear little unknown had a skin the colour of mahogany.

Sett. And teeth of ebony.

Mel. If she had but one eye, and that seemed to be always taking measure of an enormous hunch upon her back—by my soul I'd make love to her, if it was only for the pleasure of revenge.

Mellef. But what will old Lovechild say ; con-

sider his attachment to his daughter, and his inflexible honour.

Mel. Yes, I must manage to conceal my prize from him. I am very much obliged to my ancestor, Sir Roger, for his cottage—its a glorious hiding place for contraband commodities.

Mellef. But still Mrs. Melville.

Mel. Take care, Mellefont. It has been a favourite maxim with all wise men, from Solomon down to Rochefoucault, never to interfere between a man and his wife.

Mellef. Well, but if no other considerations will move you, to tyrannize over a poor girl who has put herself under your protection.

Mel. Under my protection! ridiculous, why, surely you're not such a novice in the world as to be deceived by such an artifice as this. What! I suppose, this peerless damsel has just escaped from the magic spells of some black enchanter, and now trusts to that worthy and chaste knight, Charles Melville, to carry her back in safety to her castle—no, no, these arms shall be her castle.

Sett. Its easy to see from her manner, she is of a rank superior to what her dress indicates.

Mel. Oh, no doubt, some noble lady in disguise.

Sett. I see you are incorrigible.

Enter LOVECHILD.

Mel. But hush! here's my father-in-law—not a word on your life.

Lovec. Charles ! I left Louisa in the library,
(aside) I wish he'd just go and speak to her, she
 is so unhappy at the thought of having offended
 him.

Mel. Its a fine morning for fishing, sir—Settle
 and I have been amusing ourselves.

Lovec. As I said, I left my daughter in the
 library.

Mel. (Aside.) I suppose she has been complain-
 ing to her father—I fancy, sir, my company is
 not wished for, and I detest unwelcome intru-
 sions.

Lovec. He's in a fine passion, I see ; perhaps
 not—perhaps not, sir.

Mel. Well, sir, its all very well, and how is
 my friend Lovell, I hear he arriyed last night.

Lovec. I hardly know how he is, egad I believe
 he could not answer that question himself.

Mellef. What, still in love with Emily ?

Sett. Who is this Mr. Lovell, Melville ?

Mel. Oh, an old acquaintance of mine—I knew
 him at college, and there is not an honester fel-
 low breathing—but in love he's a complete mad-
 man—I must introduce you, Settle, and if you
 can but sprinkle a few drops of your calmness
 upon his fire, you'll improve him greatly.

Sett. What, a fellow of tinder, I suppose—con-
 sumed a thousand times, yet still capable of
 fresh burning.

Mellef. Yes, and poor Emily, who has really
 a respect for him, is more perplexed than you

can imagine—he construes the smallest civility into a violent demonstration of love—if she attends to him, when he speaks, if she gives him her hand, as she steps into her carriage, he fancies himself secure of her for a wife—if to undeceive him, she treats him with coldness and distance, he complains, that whatever are her feelings towards him, he at least deserves politeness.

Sett. What a vain coxcomb he must be!

Mel. No, not so, no man was ever more free from vanity—he has a thousand excellent qualities, which he could not enumerate, and if you asked him for a picture of himself, his humility would prevent a resemblance.

Sett. He must be a whimsical fellow. I shall be glad to make his acquaintance.

Mellef. Oh! you'll be an excellent sedative to his evaporating spirit.

Sett. But, tell me, is he constant in his attachments?

Mellef. No, in good faith, no—for this last year I had heard no name from him but Sophia, and he has repeated it so often, that he seems to have taught it the very echo, for I can never stir without fancying I hear it—but what is most ludicrous of all is, this Sophia is a school acquaintance of Mrs. Melville and her sister, so that while he is dying for Emily, she detests him as a traitor to her friend.

Mel. Nay, nay, laughs at, rather than detests, and almost pities while she laughs.

Sett. And are you, Melville, acquainted with this Sophia?

Mel. No, I've never seen her, but I hear she is very beautiful, and still more romantic than pretty.

Lovec. Very well, very well, gentlemen—I'faith, Charles, when you and Mellefont get together, you are excellent painters—nothing escapes you, eh? if the one is a little too harsh, the other softens the colours, and all is right again.

Mel. I am just now in the humour—Settle, I've a great mind to draw you at full length.

Sett. Well, out with it—you won't disturb me.

Mel. No, nothing ever disturbs you, but you are more in Mellefont's stile.

Mellef. To say the truth, I am at a loss to begin, you neither love nor hate, hope nor fear, esteem nor dislike, scorn nor admire.

Sett. Its very true.

Mellef. You are a combination of negatives.

Sett. I am vastly obliged to you.

Mellef. If you was asked to give a description of your character, I am a bundle of nothings, you must say.

Sett. No, no, let the drawing be your own—I've no inclination to suicide.

Mellef. I am in truth nothing.

Sett. Flattering upon my word.

Mellef. I go for a man because I walk erect, have the shape of a man, the legs, arms, nose,

mouth, eyes, ears of a man, but as to appetites, affections, passions, which generally are added to the definition—the good dame nature has saved me the trouble of maintaining such a costly retinue.

Lovel. And now I suppose my character comes next—well, don't be too hard upon me.

Mel. Ah! by my soul, it would be a portrait, for which, if the best man in the world should blush to sit, the fault would lie in the execution, not the design.

Lovel. I believe so, I believe so, Charles—you'll make my dear girl happy, I know you will—and when I die, when I die, I'll leave both her and my character with confidence in your hands.

Mel. Well, come, let us go and see Louisa.

Lovel. Aye, let us go.

Exeunt.

Re-enter MELVILLE.

Mel. No, by heaven, I won't go, I understand this—she has employed her father as her ambassador—she means to frighten me by the frown of authority—then my little incognita with her ruby lips and sparkling eyes, she'll be expecting me: no—I'll not go. *Exit.*

Enter LOVECHILD, SETTLE, MELLEFONT.

Sett. I was afraid his good intentions would not carry him many yards.

Mellef. This is too much, I'll bring him back.
Exit.

Lovac. I did not expect this from him I own—I'll venture to say he has no right to complain—Pshaw! he should have married some wrinkled dowager, past the grand climacteric, who, instead of shewing any caprices of her own, would have watched his with the eyes of a lynx, only for the purpose of indulging them.

Sett. You see, Mr. Lovechild, the evil of these impetuous tempers.

Lovac. Aye; they are dreadfully unmanageable, to be sure.

Sett. Now, with me it was exactly the contrary; on my first entrance into life, my father placed me in the army; all my brother officers I found getting into constant scrapes.

Lovac. The heat of youth, I fancy—egad—I was once in the army myself—and, as you say, was always in some cursed difficulty or other.

Sett. And now, no doubt, you see your error.

Lovac. Not I, on my life—I am still a strong old fellow—and as for my youthful frolics, I'faith, old time, as he passes, prunes away so much, that if he has not something superfluous to begin with, he seizes the proudest branches of the tree, and leaves nothing but its wasted trunk, almost before it is come to its maturity.

Sett. With me prudence was beforehand with time—my passions were never very warm.

Lovec. So I suppose.

Sett. And now, thank heaven ! I am fairly rid of them all.

Lovec. Cast off, like misbegotten children, too puny to thrive in so cold a climate.— Well, perhaps you are right—but, to say the truth, I would not have such a fellow for a son-in-law—egad, I might as well marry my daughter to a barber's block. Come—let us see what is become of Melville.

Exeunt.

SCENE III.—*Outside of an ornamented cottage in the park.*

Enter MELVILLE and MELLEFONT.

Mel. Here, here, Mellefont—that's the room—I led her by the hand civilly enough—I believe she did not know where she was going—safe under lock and key, my boy !

Mellef. I have no patience with you.

Enter LOVECHILD.

Mel. Lovechild again ! I wish the window was not open, if she should take it into her head to look out—

Lovec. Mr. Melville, I am too old to be made a subject of ridicule.

Mel. Surely he has heard nothing. (*Aside.*) I should resent such an affront upon you sooner than yourself (*aside*) this affair does not quite suit me, I find—come, Lovechild, come.

Lovec. Nay, nay, I won't accompany you—but you'll find Louisa in the library as I told you, and if she is inclined for a walk, tell her the air here is very pleasant.

Mel. (*Aside.*) Now should my little masquerader hear us—No, I won't stir a step without you.

Lovec. What! you want a mediator, do you? oh! you are a cunning rogue—no—Charles—I won't indulge you—but, ah!—what was that—

Mel. What do you mean?

Lovec. I thought—didn't I hear music from that window?

Mel. Only the chambermaid knocking the brooms about, I suppose.

Lovec. Well, go to Louisa, Charles.

Mel. Not without you, I protest.

Lovec. Come, then—but, oh! what? I did hear music—what? does your chambermaid play on the harp, too?

Mel. There is no knowing, sir, for the kitchen has long been more accomplished than the parlour; and now I recollect, there is an old harp of Louisa's in that room; but let us go—pshaw! you won't stay and hear that vulgar jig, will you?

Lovec. Vulgar jig, do you call it?—egad, I

never heard a sweeter, more plaintive air in my life. But, hush!—her voice.

Mel. Why, surely, the old wrinkled hag can't sing.

(*Song from the window.*)

Oh sound, my lyre, a softer strain,
To thee alone I'll tell my pain,
 To thee pour out my wo;
Let every chord's vibration prove
Its sympathy to hopeless love,
 And murmur soft and low.

Lov. Beautiful, egad, beautiful—but, hush!

Mel. Another verse, by all that's horrible!

Again! that plaintive ling'ring tone
Is but the echo of my moan,
 Answ'ring the tale I tell;
Nor wilt thou speak away from me
The sorrow thus entrusted thee,
 Which now thou sooth'st so well.

Mel. Well done, old Kitty—she sings tolerably.

Enter MRS. MELVILLE and EMILY.

Emily, and I swear, my wife—would to heaven! I had never seen this pretty nightingale.
(*Aside.*)

Lovec. Ah, Louisa! I'faith I'm glad to see you—and you too, Emily!—we have had such music!

Mel. Droll enough—Mr. Lovechild is taking my old, wither'd Kate, who, you know, has descended in the family like an heir-loom, from generation to generation, for a Lesbia.

Lovec. Upon my soul I never heard a more melodious voice in my life.

Mel. (*To Mrs. Mel.*) Louisa—I—I—what! so contemptuous! well, be it so, I shall be better received within, perhaps. *Exit.*

Mrs. Mel. Is he gone?

Lovec. I grow old, perhaps my ears deceive me—what, he is off—this is not to be borne—how I hate what they call a genius. I shall never look any man in the face again who has the least particle of a soul in his whole composition—if he has enough to keep his body from putrefaction, it's all I care for. Curse on his Will-o'th'-Wisp vagaries. A genius—I believe in my soul, if your geniuses were to publish their confessions, the records of Tyburn would be spotless in comparison with them—friendship insulted! love outraged! all common duties despised. No, no, Mr. Settle was right, give me a well-built fellow, with a good digestion—Emily, you are lucky, my girl. Mr. Mellefont is a sober, serious, sensible, matter-of-fact-person, with none of this mysterious nonsense.

Emily. Yes, look at him now, his counte-

nance is the picture of good humour, and as for words.

Mellef. A fine day, Miss Lovechild.

Emily. I don't perceive it—its very likely to rain I think.

Mellef. Isn't it more pleasant for being overclouded—the morning was intolerably oppressive.

Emily. Well, I declare, I thought the air was a little frosty.

Mellef. As you please, madam—I see the weather, as well as every thing else, must be subject to your caprices.

Lovec. This is pleasant, vastly pleasant upon my soul.

Emily. I should not wish to have any power over what is so irregular and inconstant.

Lovec. Take off my neck-cloth, I shall be choaked else.

Mellef. Its very true indeed, that power to be enjoyed, must be exercised in reason—it must not depend upon mere whim—it must be raised above the power of chance—but if we speak of the power which one person has over another from the influence of the affections, here a fault is more dangerous.

Emily. And more disgusting, for it must come from the heart, and as it lies deeper, is more difficult to eradicate.

Mellef. Here a caprice is a fault to be resented.

Emily. It would shew a nobler nature to forgive it.

Lovel. Death and Damnation! this is intolerable—what cursed star shone at my nativity, that I should get nothing but daughters. Here's one married to a fellow that makes her wretched, and the other is so afraid of not following her example, that, egad, she is beginning before marriage—and you, sir—you, sir—who the devil are you, sir? that give yourself these airs?

Mrs. Mel. Leave them to themselves, I entreat you—come—pray let us leave them.

Lovel. Well—well—be it so—I never was so vexed in my life.

Mrs. Mel. Emily, you'll find us in the chestnut walk.

Emily. Nay, stay—I am coming with you.

Exeunt MRS. MELVILLE and LOVECHILD.

Mellef. And will you go, Emily.

Emily. Certainly, for as every little caprice in me is a fault to be resented, indeed I hardly know I am safe in your company. *Exit.*

Mellef. There is something in this house perfectly infectious. I am a quiet temperate fellow, with a moderate pulse, but in this house I'm as ridiculous as its owner.

Enter DAZZLE,

Daz. Give me breath—for heaven's sake let me laugh—don't interrupt me or I shall perish.

Mellef. What now, Dazzle?

Daz. Oh, its too much to bear—too much I protest—let me laugh out, Mellefont—pray, pray, let me laugh out.

Mellef. With all my heart—only let me know the jest.

Daz. We shall have no fighting to-day—I have seen Fightwell, Hah ! hah ! hah ! I've seen him—if we have any fighting—

Mellef. I am glad of it with all my soul—but I see no occasion for this violent mirth.

Daz. I wish I could imitate him for you—you'd die with laughing—he rushes forward to the threshold of the door—“ what, and he'll meet me ?” says he—“ an hour hence, eh ? was he backward ? was he frightened ?—“ Not in the least, I assure you.”—“ Where shall I hit him—“ eh, Bob ?—I don't mean to kill him—shall I “ wing him ? A rap on the shoulder ?” “ He is “ in no humour for trifling, I promise you.” “ What ! in a passion, is he ? The fellow blus-“ ters, does he ? If he stand sideways, suppose “ I shave him—take the tip of his chin—dislo-“ cate his lower jaw, and spoil his chattering—“ no, I'll take off his ear—aye—the chin if he “ stand sideways, and the right ear for a full “ front.”

Mellef. An agreeable pastime he would have made of it.

Daz. Well—I let him go on in this way for

some time—'till at last, with some difficulty, I took advantage of a short silence, to tell him Melville's terms—really no miser at the loss of his treasure was ever so chap-fallen—“ why,” says he, affecting a laugh, “ it would be better to bring a cannon to the ground and tie us both together to the mouth.” “ No, no,” said I, Melville's mode will do as well.”

Mellef. You have acted your part admirably.

Daz. Then I left him, bidding him adieu, 'till we met under the old ruin.

Enter MELVILLE.

Mellef. Ah—here's Melville—we must change the subject—well, Dazzle, I fancy you are come back from Italy an amazing amateur of the arts.

Daz. Like the rest of my fellow-travellers—the progress of taste is the same with us all—when first we go into Italy, nothing strikes us but magnificent ruins; I remember strutting through the forum, you talk of the spring in my walk—aye—aye—you should have seen me at Rome—there, sir, leaning against a pillar at the foot of the capitoline hill, I began to pour out one of Cicero's orations—I made such a noise, that I collected a croud about me—but here the illusion vanished, for it was impossible to take such a pale, languid, enervated, half-

starved gang, for the conquerors of the world. What a passion I was in—why, you miserable varlets, said I, and so you don't comprehend me; are not you ashamed, you rascals, of ever having had a Tully among you, and not understanding the language in which he spoke? What! you could not be contented with it—eh? you must mend it with your *inis*, and your *ones*, and your *ellis*, and your *accios*.

Mel. You gave them good old English at last.

Mellef. Well—but you forget—you were telling us the progress of taste with you gentlemen of virtù.

Daz. Oh! yes, true, for the first year, as I said, ruins are our sole delight—a perpendicular is the devil. Well, then—for the next six months, we admire nothing but statues. But mark me, they must be all imbrowned with the venerable hue of antiquity. The transition is easy from these to pictures—but still ancient—none of your modern daubs—only your Michael Angelos, your Raphaels, and your Titians—then, sir, for the third year, our minds relax from their severe exertions, and trifle with your stuccos, your entablatures, and your vases—or condescend to flirt with a Cleopatra at Pisani's—and now give me a little English intelligence—how goes the world at home?

Mellef. Just as when you left us—the mer-

chants every thing—the nobility nothing but at Westminster—the tongues of the lawyers gain upon their wigs, and a new curl is a sure forerunner of more than one new argument—the excellence of a speech is in proportion to its length, and the rule of criticism is the watch—our coffee-houses are full of politicians, and every man, like poor Sancho, thinks himself able to govern his island were it ever so great.

Mel. You must not take the picture from Mellefont, for something I see has vexed him this morning.

Mellef. Most true! *(Aside.)*

Daz. And now for the literati.

Mellef. As usual, men of wit too indolent to write, and authors too dull to write well. Abundance of poets, who, too weak to stand by themselves, never come out but in parties; hence your Collections, Miscellanies, Anthologies, Poetical Farragos, Fugitive Pieces, Sprigs of Parnassus. We have tours without end, over the ground already described by a Gray or an Addison. We have wonders from Egypt, and are taught to admire the majesty of a bust without expression, and the simplicity of a form without shape.

Daz. And what do you say of the stage?

Mellef. The stage is improving—nature, to be sure, has sustained two tedious attacks—the first was from a sickly band of sentiments, so encumbered with women and children, and house-

hold baggage, that they were at last defeated—but then came a most terrific array of giants and monsters, armed cap-a-pee, with pendent skeletons for their banners, and *Death* for their watch-word, backed by all the artillery of the infernal regions—nature fled at first, but it was more from fear than real want of strength, so I fancy she'll gain the victory after all.

Daz. And now, Melville, I see you're longing to contradict all this.

Mel. No, not I, though, of our authors, I could name one at least, who in the midst of severe professional labours, is ever awake to the more general interests of his country, which he has discussed with feeling, and liberality, and dignity—his friends may give him a higher and warmer panegyric.

Daz. His name—his name, Charles.

Mel. And, in spite of ill-natured descriptions, we have still honesty in our statesmen, eloquence in our orators, honor in our nobles, generosity in our merchants—our men have foibles, but few vices; and as for our women, Mellefont, how soft are they without indolence, how affectionate without jealousy, how beautiful without coquetry, how gay without indiscretion!

Mellef. I knew where his panegyric would dwell longest, though he takes all possible pains to contradict it in the whole of his conduct.

Daz. Right, right, my good-fellow—and if a man is not happy in such a country——

Mel. (*Sighs.*) The fault must be with himself.

Daz. And now for my return to Fightwell—we shall meet by and by. . . . *Exit.*

Mellef. (*Aside.*) He seems in an excellent humour for a lecture just now, and as my little Emily's consent depends upon his reform—Melville, you have got me into a scrape.

Mel. What do you mean?

Mellef. Emily declares she won't marry me 'till you make a better husband.

Mel. Nonsense.

Mellef. Its true as I live.

Mel. Pray don't torment me.

Mellef. Now, I declare, I should deem it a great personal obligation if you would make yourself happy by treating your wife as other men do.

Mel. What—what have you seen in me that you take such a liberty as this with me—what right have you to interfere between me and Mrs. Melville? I am sure she did not employ you as her advocate, and if she had, I should not have listened to you the more.

Mellef. Nay, nay, I did not mean to offend you.

Mel. But you have offended me—you rudely break into feelings, which are, and ever shall be, exclusively my own—the only propriety I care about.

Mellef. Well, I'll leave you. *Exit.*

Mel. I detest this tyranny of friendship—yet he meant it well, aye, and the poor fellow was vexed by Emily's caprice. Mellefont—
Mellefont. *Exit.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.—SCENE I.

An Apartment.

MELVILLE.

Mel. I can trifle no longer, this affair will probably terminate seriously, and the thought of dying without asking her forgiveness, stings me to the heart.

Enter MRS. MELVILLE.

Are you going out, Louisa?

Mrs. Mel. Yes, don't interrupt me—I have got visits to pay that will quite tire the poor horses—I must first go to lady Ruinall's—more than four miles, you know—to ask how she bore the fatigues of her ball—then I think I shall take the opportunity of paying a visit to old Mrs. Wrinkle, to inquire after her grand-daughter, who is just recovering from the measles—then, after all, I must leave a card for Mrs. Tythe, at the parsonage—and another for Mrs. Sly, the attorney's wife.

Mel. Farewell—then.

Mrs. Mel. I am full of employment, am I not?

Mel. I would not interrupt you—may God bless you wherever you go. (*throwing himself in a chair.*)

Mrs. Mel. Are you not well?

Mel. Oh—perfectly.

Mrs. Mel. Why so melancholy, my dear Charles?

Mel. Come, sit down by me for a minute or two, I shall not trouble you long.

Mrs. Mel. Yes—for an hour, if you like—only don't look so sorrowful.

Mel. Louisa, have you forgiven me?

Mrs. Mel. Forgiven you? When was I angry with you?

Mel. Never—never—to my everlasting shame—never—your kind affectionate nature I have trampled upon without remorse, I have seen you overwhelmed with sorrow, and by him who should have shielded you almost from the vicissitudes of fortune—when I die, Louisa, will you still think of me without indignation.

Mrs. Mel. Indignation! oh heavens!

Mel. When this poor frame shall be mouldering in the grave, beyond the efforts of skill or even your love, will you respect my memory?

Mrs. Mel. Why, why torture me thus?

Mel. Oh! when the sneering crowd shall point at my tomb, with the harsh reproach,

the vulgar jest, shall a sigh from you check the slander and defeat the malice.

Mrs. Mel. How can I answer you ?

Mel. When all shall be dissolved, all perish'd, when “ life's idle business shall be past,”—“ when you, you shall be belov'd no more”—shall one soft remembrance escape the world's poison, and dwell in that bosom, sainted, for ever sainted by its place of refuge.

Mrs. Mel. Tell me, tell me, I entreat you, without reserve, all you wish.

Mel. I have no wish on earth but to be convinced that you love me.

Mrs. Mel. Come—come—why this melancholy tone—we have had our quarrels its true—but perhaps they are inseparable from real affection—it is indifference only that is uniform—don't be alarmed—put me to the trial—would you have me give up my acquaintance—I have heard you express your dislike of some of them.

Mel. No, no.

Mrs. Mel. Would you live in the country altogether—you know it has long been my desire—only, for heaven's sake, my dearest Charles —have no concealments from me—I cannot bear disguise.

Mel. (Aside) If I stay any longer I shall grow so fond of life, that I shall not dare to meet that blustering coxcomb. No—its nothing, Louisa —yet, yet, when I think of the past, I would wish to express my gratitude to you; when I .

merited your anger, your only reproach has been a sigh—when others would have been inflamed with revenge and scorn, you have been melted into tears—(By heaven I must leave her—its too much—*Aside*) only remember this, in spite of my faults, of all my wrongs to you, I have ever loved you with the truest affection, and if ever I should fall a victim to some unhappy accident, my chief and last regret will be, that I shall see you no more. *Exit.*

Mrs. Mel. What can he mean—I knew—I knew, he loved me—I did not require these protestations.

Enter EMILY.

Oh—my dearest Emily—such an interview with Melville.

Emily. What ! suing for pardon at your feet, I suppose.

Mrs. Mel. We really must defer our visits 'till to-morrow—I can think of nobody but him.

Emily. Well—I declare—I wonder you are not grown quite callous to his whims.

Mrs. Mel. But there was something in his manner, so solemnly affectionate, so deliberately tender.

Emily. That you imagine he will never play the truant again. Well, if we are not to pay our visits, let us take a walk and we'll talk of Melville all the way. *Mr. Mellefont* is waiting

for us. I assure you we have had as pretty a little quarrel, followed by as pathetic a reconciliation, as you and Melville could have wished. I hope we shall keep out of Mr. Lovell's way—I met him just now, and he looked so melancholy, I could not help bestowing a smile upon him, and in the instant his spirits were so boisterous, that he quite alarmed me. *Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Another room.*

MELVILLE and a SERVANT.

Mel. (*Sealing a letter*) You have lived a long time in my family—twenty years, is it not—you shall be taken care of, my good fellow. I think I can depend upon you?

Ser. I hope so, sir.

Mel. This letter, you see, is directed to Mrs. Melville—my wish is, and mind me, you must be exact—that you give it to her some time this evening, unless I ask you for it again. (*Aside*) There is Fightwell's challenge, to shew her that I did not voluntarily run into this danger—my will, in which I have left her my sole heir—and—and a few words to bid her farewell—pshaw! I am going to play the child again. *Exit.*

Ser. Lived long in the family? depend upon me? for that matter, there is not a servant;

whether he has lived long or short with you—no, nor a Christian soul within ten miles of the house, that would not go round the world for you—but something is amiss, that I am sure of—he had tears in his eyes all the time he spoke to me—and he is not a man that whispers for nothing—egad—my mistress shall have the letter before evening or I am a Frenchman.

Exit.

SCENE III.—*The Park.*

Enter LUCY and GIUSEPPE.

Gius. Every where—every where—in the east—the west—the north—the south—I do speak five different languages.

Lucy. Lord bless me !

Gius. German—French—English—Italian—Turkish—you have no idea how I used to make those young Turks, with their turbans and their pipes.—I soon taught them how to brush a coat and wait at table in the English stile.

Lucy. Well, Mr. Giuseppe, I am afraid I did give—I don't know what to call it—but I—I did give a sort of a promise just now, but you know its necessary just to inquire what we are to live upon.

Gius. The first year we will live upon love,

*you charmer, and then we'll think of the money
the second.*

Lucy. It was my mistress desired me to ask you that question—or indeed I should not have thought of it—but she insists upon knowing, and won't give her consent without it.

Gius. You know I have forty pounds a year from my master—these, with my perquisites, such as clothes and travelling—but prenez garde—what I am telling you now is only for your private ear—voyez-vous ? ma foi—not for your mistress.

Lucy. Travelling ? you don't call that a perquisite—I am sure it almost ruins me.

Gius. That's because you don't understand it—I have made three of the grand tours, as tutor and courier to young English gentlemen—the last was the least profitable, but however I made a hundred pounds by it.

Lucy. How do you mean ?

Gius. Nothing so easy—I always arrive at the inn before the carriage, I call the landlord aside—charge enough—mon ami—my good friend, only charge enough—my master is heir to the sixth part of all England—only charge enough—and if you will but give me half your profits, I won't say one word—I'll be as secret as the grave.

Lucy. But, Lord ! is this quite honest ?

Gius. Oh, mon Dieu ! its what we all do—its a part of our profession—mei fratelli, mes freres ;

my brothers would not acknowledge me, if I had any scruples about it—then to say the truth, our masters get a great deal by us.

Lucy. How so?

Gius. Oh ! they are stared at like little gods—the master of the post shrugs up his shoulders thirty times in one minute—his wife drops curtsies as thick as hail—the boys and the girls—some gape, some huzza ! all wonder at the great mi lord. Sancta Maria ! here is my master—now, Lucy, now is the time for you to make your fortune.

Enter LOVELL.

Say something that he may think your mistress is in love with him.

Lov. (Aside) This surely is love—oh ! with what avarice will I treasure up that heavenly smile.

Lucy. But, Lord ! Mr. Giuseppe, she does not care.—

Gius. Hush—hush—you'll ruin us for ever—well, only say, yes, to the questions I shall ask you—but speak loud enough for him to overhear you.

Lucy. Now for it then.

Gius. And so your mistress came into her own room this morning, and said, with the tears in her eyes, she only feared she was not worthy of him.

Lucy. Yes.

Lov. What do I hear ?

Gius. And then she did get up and walk about the room, and call herself the happiest woman in the world.

Lucy. Yes ! poor lady.

Gius. And then she went to the window, and looked out, as if she expected to see somebody walking in the park.

Lucy. Yes, and then she began to peel an orange, and threw the rind over her left shoulder, and, as I hope to be saved, it came exactly into the form of an L.

Gius. (Aside) Well done, my little scholar ! And she looked on it as it lay on the ground—ah ! said she, there is magic in every thing that belongs to that man.

Lov. (Coming forward) What ! Giuseppe, eh !

Gius. My master ! oh ! I am so surprized.

Lov. So so, and this is your sovereign lady, is it Joe—what, you are Miss Lovechild's waiting woman, are you ?

Lucy. Yes, sir.

Lov. What do you shake your head so for ?

Lucy. Oh sir ! my poor mistress.

Lov. I'faith—I like your choice, Joseph, and you'll come to me for your dowry, will you ? *(to Lucy)*

Gius. To be sure ; the wedding clothes are very expensive.

Lov. Well! come to me this evening, and we'll consider what can be done for you both. Let me see, I have but two or three guineas in my pocket at present—what is your name?

Lucy. Lucy, sir.

Lov. There, take them, Lucy; they are but an earnest of my future favours.

Lucy. Thank you, sir.

Gius. Come, Lucy—never tempt fortune too far. (*aside*) We are much obliged to you indeed, sir.

Exeunt.

Lov. I dare say, my dear Emily will like to see her servant well provided for; we shall have many pensioners of this sort; her disposition seems to desert its nature, when she is not employed in some benevolent scheme or other. Oh! what unspeakable rapture to meet with such a woman! I breathe a new atmosphere—I am all gossamer—the things of earth are infinitely below me—the world seems made a ball for me to kick it.

Enter SETTLE.

Sett. Who is this? Oh! the mad lover beyond a doubt—and as mad as I could wish. I'll speak to him—he'll be entertaining—Mr. Lovell—I presume.

Lov. The same, sir—Mr. Settle—one of Melville's most intimate friends.

Sett. Yes, sir—my name is Settle—but as to

your other appellation, indeed Mr. Melville has so many intimate friends, it has almost ceased to be a distinction—but, you, Mr. Lovell, are in the service of the ladies.

Lov. Aye, he has heard of it. (*Aside.*)

Sett. Miss Lovechild is indeed a most fascinating young lady.

Lov. What perfection is there with which she is not blessed.

Sett. Her easy gaiety, so tempered by the sobriety of her judgment.

Lov. Judgment, sir? the ruling power is taste, ever on the watch when the judgment might slumber.

Sett. Well then, she has no judgment.

Lov. No judgment, sir? what do you mean? I say she is all judgment—it is not merely the beauty of her person I admire, though in this she is superior to all other women—nor the grace with which she moves, exquisite as it is—it is her mind, expressing itself by these organs—the human figure seems given her merely in bounty to us to make celestial excellence for once intelligible.

Sett. How this love sharpens the wits—then her hand, Mr. Lovell, how delicately soft.

Lov. I'll be sworn you never touched it, but through her glove—you laugh—sir—'sdeath—sir—you don't mean to blaspheme.

Sett. Blaspheme?

Lov. Yes, sir, calumny against Miss Lovechild is downright blasphemy.

Sett. And do you really think it calumny.

Lov. Yes, sir, if you assert that Miss Lovechild has ever shewn you any particular favour—you speak falsely—sir, you are guilty of a damn'd infernal—

Sett. Take care, Mr. Lovell—though much licence is to be allowed to you gentlemen—and though my laugh was as innocent and unmeaning as at one of Sir Frank Falsewit's jokes—

Lov. Unmeaning?—I knew it was unmeaning, give me your hand—Mr. Settle—I beg you a thousand pardons—I knew it was unmeaning—I knew Miss Lovechild must treat you with the most sovereign contempt imaginable—I knew—

Enter MELLEFONT.

Sett. Mellefont—you are just come in time—we are in some danger.

Mellef. Surely you and Lovell have not been quarrelling; nature has put you at such a distance from each other, that I should think you might go through life without jostling.

Sett. That's true—but lovers are always jealous—are not they, Mr. Lovell?

Lov. Jealous—no, no. (*Laughs.*)

Enter a SERVANT, who gives a letter to SETTLE.

A strange fellow this, Mr. Settle. I wonder what the devil makes Mellefont so fond of him.

(*Aside.*)

Mellef. Any news from the north, Settle? I suppose not, from the carelessness with which you read your letter.

Set. No—not much, as you say—there read it yourself.

Mellef. (*Reading*) Why, your house is burnt.

Sett. So it appears.

Mellef. And a bond for 5000*l.* to be paid you on delivery, burnt too.

Sett. Unfortunate enough—for the man who owes me the money is too much a rascal to pay a debt of honour.

Mellef. (*Reading*) “The fire is still raging, “and defeats every effort to stifle it. I am “afraid the stable and out-houses of every de-“scription will be involved in one blaze.”

Sett. They are all burnt before this time most certainly—well, I shall set off, as I intended, to-morrow—I have two or three places to call at in my way—but I shall be in time to give directions about carrying away the rubbish.

Mellef. If you can bear this patiently, I cannot—(*tears the letter.*)

Sett. Well—it's hard indeed, if a man may not be as indifferent as he pleases to his own misfortunes.

Mellef. You should be struck out from the muster-roll of human kind.

Sett. Yet when my name is called over, I know none that is heard with more attention—am I not well received in all societies?

Mellef. That's true—and I have often been surprized at it.

Sett. Surprized at it, with your knowledge of the world—depend upon it, Mellefont, I am right. I had not been long out, before I perceived that your open hearted, good-natured fellows, seldom succeeded. By some, they were thought officious, others pushed them so far, that a refusal was necessary at last—in this case the refusal was remembered—all pasts favours forgotten.

Mellef. An agreeable picture of life!

Sett. I took a different course—my maxim has been not to endeavour to please, but to avoid giving offence.

Mellef. And this you fancy has succeeded.

Sett. Admirably—there is not a house where I am not a welcome guest.

Mellef. Yes, you are treated as a part of the furniture—and when you die, you will be regretted, because, like a broken, discarded chair, you'll leave in the rooms a vacant space.

Sett. So much the better—I shall die, as I lived, giving no pain.

Mellef. I wish Melville was here to answer you.

Sett. Oh—aye, I've heard him often—he talks of the regret of our country, the sighs of friends, the tears of widowed beauty; for my part, if I can but live comfortably, I little care how soon I am forgotten.

Mellef. Well, its fortunate we're not all of us so easily contented.

Sett. And yet its true, that all our miseries arise from having too many actors, and too little audience.

Mellef. What an equalizing jacobinical system you would make of it. Where would be our heroes, our philosophers, our poets?

Sett. Yes—here we have a hero, there a plunderer—here a naturalist, there an astrologer and alchymist—here a poet, there a Bavius and a Mævius—Melville doats upon his wife and keeps a —

Lov. But, sir, would you do nothing? Would you do nothing but eat, drink, sleep, and die? Wouldn't you love?

Sett. Love! I can't say I ever asked myself the question. But a man that loves, is not he very apt to marry?

Lov. Well, sir, he may love still, I suppose.

Set. I fancy not, sir.

Lov. Why not? such I know is the language of men who —

Sett. He's off again—I'd better make my retreat—I must beg your pardon for interrupting you, but I have an engagement just at this hour—not, I assure you, with a lady, Mr. Lovell. (*to Mellefont*) Take care of him Mellefont. (*he going out.*)

Enter MELVILLE.

Mel. (*to Settle*) Its about the time, Settle, I

believe—I'll follow you immediately. (*Exit Settle.*) Mellefont, a word with you—this duel hangs upon me most heavily—not that I am afraid of dying—but, my wife, Mellefont.

Mellef. Nay, she will surely be the last person to lament the loss of a man who has been a perpetual torment to her.

Mel. At this time you might have spared such a remark.

Mellef. I speak as I think.

Mel. Yes, it is too true—the world will receive her with congratulations, upon having escaped from a tyrant—from a capricious monster, who sported with every feeling good men deem most valuable; and she, she herself, must acknowledge the happiness of her fortune. Oh, no, I wrong her, deeply wrong her. Did she not assure me this moment how entirely she had forgiven me, and shall I dare to disbelieve her? Mellefont, you will marry her sister—oh! take care of my poor Louisa—cherish her, prevent her fears, anticipate her wishes; and if, in defiance of all your care, she should still drop a tear to the memory of such a wretch as I am—tell her I loved her—I adored her—that my heart owned no feeling but its affection for her, that its last beat was her's. *Exit.*

Mellef. As for the duel, I find Fightwell has already taken his departure—so of that there is no danger; if Melville would but spread these fits of fondness over a wider surface, how infi-

nitely happier we should all be; but, Lovell, you were quarrelling with my friend Settle.

Lov. Why, he had the impudence to boast of Miss Lovechild's partiality for him.

Mellef. And was it the expression, or the falsehood, you chose to resent.

Lov. As for the expression, though indeed Miss Lovechild should not be mentioned lightly; yet, when the whole soul is occupied with her image, and no other object dare intrude, as into a temple made sacred by her presence; then, if in the midst of praise and eulogy, her adored name should involuntarily escape the lips—no, no, it was the falsehood I condemned.

Mellef. Hah ! hah ! hah !—really this is the most extraordinary self-delusion I ever witnessed.

Lov. Self-delusion—what do you mean ?

Mellef. You deem yourself called upon by the obligations of a lover, to defend Miss Lovechild's reputation—now are you aware that these obligations are imposed by yourself alone ?

Lov. I don't understand you.

Mellef. For heaven's sake consider for a moment—what proofs did she ever give of an attachment to you ?

Lov. A singular question !

Mellef. What ! I suppose, when she came into a room full of company, and the chair next yours was the only vacant one, she has sat down upon it.

Lov. (*Aside*) He's jealous, half-mad with jealousy, upon my soul.

Mellef. I observed indeed, the other day, when you told the story of the poor widow who was burnt to death, leaving seven friendless children, a tear started into her eye.

Lov. And when I proposed a subscription, was not she the first to give me a guinea.

Mellef. That was meant for the widow.

Lov. What do you laugh at? I'll plague him—(*aside*) I grant, sir, there has been no explicit declaration; you imagine that the tongue alone has the powers of expression—let me tell you, sir, that when feeling souls are inspired with a mutual flame, there is not a feature silent; the eye, the complexion, the dimple of the cheek, the smile that plays round the mouth, are all gifted with a matchless eloquence, which, though heard and understood by one alone, are a thousand times more powerful than the language of the tongue.

Mellef. But not so clear, I am afraid, for to reward your piece of intelligence by another, Miss Lovechild is already engaged.

Lov. Engaged! engaged!

Mellef. I know it.

Lov. She never told me so.

Mellef. Because she supposed that all the organs of speech you just now enumerated, would have been sufficiently explicit.

Lov. Engaged, sir, to whom?

Mellef. Upon my soul to no greater a person than Tom Mellefont.

Lov. Engaged! to you? to you?

Mellef. What! that word *engaged* sounds oddly in your ear.

Lov. Sir, I'm not to be catechized like a school-boy. *Exit.*

Mellef. The insanity of the Melville-atmosphere. *Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*The Park—an old Ruin.*

MELVILLE and SETTLE.

Mel. Its strange, Fightwell does not make his appearance. Its a good deal beyond the time we fixed.

Sett. I suppose this new mode of combat requires some preparation.

Mel. He will be here presently, no doubt; well, you'll remember your promise—if I fall, you'll wait till the dusk of the evening, and then remove this girl with as little eclat as possible—if I live, I will take the trouble off your hands.

Sett. I would hardly trust you.

Mel. I declare I had quite forgotten her. Settle, we have known each other long, and though we think differently, and feel still more so, on most subjects—

Sett. Come, come, Charles, a truce with these deep tones.

Mel. Bear with me this once, you know I shall leave behind me many enemies—though I am very young, I have gone through various scenes; in most of them I foolishly set the world at defiance; they pitied me for my ignorance, though I knew more than I could submit to practise—yet, it was always a whimsical contradiction in me, that in the midst of this self-elevation, there was no man so low that I did not desire his applause.

Sett. No, there was not a beggar in the streets that had not you in his power.

Mel. And even now, when perhaps I have not time for such considerations, the thought that abuse and obloquy—but, Settle, as for this affair of the duel, surely you would not have had me a mere mark for his never failing skill to aim at.

Sett. What made you pull him by the nose?

Mel. A very hard kick which he gave me on the leg.

Sett. Are you sure it was designed.

Mel. It came with all the weight of mature deliberation I promise you.

Enter DAZZLE.

Daz. What! you are waiting for Fightwell, then I protest you might have waited till

doomsday, for he'll not make his appéarance where there is such a blood-thirsty fellow as you, Melville.

Mel. Why, where is he?

Daz. That's more than I can tell you, for he is as far off as four horses, and double fee'd postillions can carry him in a quarter of an hour, so I leave you to calculate.

Mel. Hah ! hah ! hah ! he's panic-struck, I did not expect this, but I'm glad of it—I think I should not have shrunk from him.—

Enter MRS. MELVILLE and LOVECHILD.

But who would not be afraid of dying, when here, here, there is so much worth living for.

(*Embracing MRS. MELVILLE.*)

Mrs. Mel. Are you safe. (*MR. and MRS. MELVILLE talk apart.*)

Lovec. Is that scoundrel Fightwell gone?

Daz. Aye, to the antipodes, and if Melville has set his heart upon fighting, he must be content with one of us for his antagonist.

Lovec. Why, Charles, you did not suppose old John would keep such a letter as you gave him till the evening, did you, Charles? I've read it, I promise you, we made the best of our way; egad, my knees tremble. Louisa you tired your old father—Charles, you are a brave fellow, and a generous fellow, and an affectionate fellow.

Daz. I wish, Melville, every man would act

as you have done; cowards would find their places in society, for there would not be such a thing as a bully in the country.

Sett. I thought Mr. Fightwell was your friend, Mr. Dazzle.

Daz. No, no, I used to be amused with him, because to signalize himself he chose a different mode from the rest of us ; it was his maxim to make duelling subservient to the purposes of morality, so that he should have taken a parson, as well as a surgeon, to the field with him ; a beau, sir, he would take off his curl—a glutton he would shoot through the stomach—a lawyer through the jaw—a politician through the palm of the hand—a courtier through the knee, and so on.

Lovc. And I suppose for this son-in-law of mine he would have loaded his pistol with snipe-shot, for if he had gone farther than skin deep, there would have been an end of his morality, the sententious villain !—but come, let us leave this gloomy old ruin.

Daz. Aye, let us begone, it reminds us of what we came for. *Exeunt.*

ACT IV.—SCENE I.—*A Room.*

MELVILLE, SETTLE, MELLEFONT.

DAZZLE, *drinking wine.*

Mel. Well, Settle, you know my toast, how shall I call her?—the wanderer?

Sett. No, no, that's too romantic for me.

Mellef. How is this, Melville? just before dinner you swore you only waited for the dusk of the evening to dismiss this woman.

Mel. Dismiss!—who the devil can think of dismissing, as you call it—of dismissing a fine girl, with a bottle of Burgundy before him?

Daz. No, no, a man is only a stoic when his lips are dry, but as soon as ever they are moistened with the juice of the grape, the eloquence of love slips through them so naturally, that you are irresistible at the very moment you hardly know what you are talking about.

Mel. Where's Lovell?—he's grown a sad companion of late—as to Lovechild, its excusable at his age.

Sett. I assure you, Mr. Lovell was very entertaining this morning.

Mel. Well, let us fill a bumper to his Sophia in his absence; pray, Mellefont, unfold that forehead of yours—what, I suppose, you think Emily should have had the precedence.

Mellef. And then we'll drink Mrs. Melville.

Daz. Aye, Mrs. Melville—by heaven she should go before them all. I shall never forget her on the ground this morning. That gloomy old ruin exactly suited the purpose for which we were assembled—all was dissatisfaction, misery, and darkness; then, like a conciliating cherub, just descended from the brightest part of heaven, she restored us all to light, harmony, and peace. The agitation she was in would have made any other woman awkward and ungraceful, but in her it gave new dignity to the outline, while it took nothing from the softness of the colouring.

Sett. You are a poet, Mr. Dazzle, I presume.

Mel. Dazzle, give us a song.

Daz. A song!

Mel. Aye, but let it be something gay.

Sett. Yes, give us a song, Mr. Dazzle, or we shall have Melville in tears.

Mel. But first we'll drink Mellefont's toast, though its rather a singular one. (*aside*) The wine almost chokes me—Come, Dazzle, a song.

DAZZLE sings.

The god of wine! the wise insist,
 His cradle was the tomb of love,
 Poor Semelè could not resist
 The thund'rer from above,
 With all his heaven the monarch flies,
 The charming mortal sinks and dies.
 Soon as he trod the earth,
 Bacchus redeem'd his birth,
 Who with his presence fir'd,
 Is not with love inspir'd;
 The purple glass goes round
 With glowing beauty ever, ever crown'd.

Mellef. That song's your own.

Daz. What if I confess.

Mellef. There's a coxcomical unintelligible originality about it, that would have marked out its author in any part of the world.

Mel. This room is uncomfortably hot, we'll change it.

Sett. Pshaw, we are very well here.

Mel. No, no, it's a bad aspect for a summer evening. (*Rings a bell.*)

Enter a SERVANT.

Put a table in the next room, and let the wine be cool; come, gentlemen, I'll shew you the way.

Sett. We shall return in five minutes I suppose. *Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The outside of the Cottage.*

Enter LOVELL.

Lov. Melville is in a most whimsical temper, though I have but little right to say so, for I hardly know what to make of myself this evening—the wine I could not bear—what an ideot I've been; even that dull fellow, Settle, allows us some licence, but I've out-ranted a German lover on the stage; then to forget that dear girl to whom I have so often sworn everlasting love; if I remember right, she was expected at Bath yesterday; my horses did pretty well last night, I'll put them to the proof again—I can be there in ten minutes.

SOPHIA from the window.

Soph. I certainly heard some one speaking, pray heaven it may not be my persecutor.

Lov. I'll go, by my soul I'll go.

Soph. Sir, sir—my spirits are in such alarm I can hardly speak. *(Aside.)*

Lov. Did not some one call me? ah, what pretty little bird is chirping there?

Soph. I conjure you, sir, by every object most dear to you, to assist me in making my escape from this place.

Lov. What! a prisoner of Melville's—no,

really, madam, you must excuse me, there are laws of gallantry which I would preserve to be sure, but then they must not interfere with those of friendship.

Soph. You mistake me entirely; I have been used most cruelly.

Lov. Used most cruelly? I'faith, Melville has been rather hard upon me sometimes—I've a great mind to take my revenge.

Soph. But carry me to Mrs. Melville, and my obligations to you will be unbounded.

Lov. Mrs. Melville? Why, who are you? this cursed twilight won't give me a peep at you.

Soph. Oh, there is no time for confidence.

Lov. Then really there can be no time for assistance—yet, stop—Mrs. Melville!—well, if you are really in distress, and don't deserve it; if you are unfortunate, and the tones of your voice, I own, plead most powerfully for you, I will assist you.

Soph. Ten thousand, thousand thanks.

Lov. Well, then, run down stairs and meet me at the door here, and if any one dares to attempt a rescue—

Soph. But the door is barred, and I believe guarded.

Lov. Barred and guarded!—what a pretty voice, and it is so like that I used to hang upon for hours together; well, but how can you get

down?—your window is too high for a jump, I fear.

Soph. Much, much too high. But are there no other means?

Lov. Now I recollect—I saw some workmen this morning mending the roof, on the right; perhaps they may have left a ladder.

Soph. Pray heaven he be successful, for I would rather perish here, than owe my deliverance to the mercy of my persecutor.

Re-enter LOVELL with a ladder.

Lov. (fixing the ladder) Yes, yes, Melville, you deserve this from me.

Soph. How, how shall I repay you?

Lov. Come, be quick, and I will put you under the guardianship of Mrs. Melville in a moment.
SOPHIA descends.

Lov. Good God! what do I see? do my senses deceive me?—Sophia!

Soph. Is it possible?—Mr. Lovell?

Lov. Your protector—naturally your protector. Am I awake?

Soph. Yes, I am really flesh and blood—*(giving him her hand).*

Lov. Why, I was just going to meet you at Bath—how I rejoice to see you; but, Melville! with what intolerable insolence has he dared—

Soph. Alas! alas! what thoughts must you entertain of me from meeting me thus.

Lov. Not one unworthy of you, not one—I know your spotless purity; it would be treason to doubt it—but come.

Soph. Yet stay, I will tell you how I came here.

Lov. No, no, not now—save the relation for Mrs. Melville.

Soph. But soft, I heard a voice—heavens! I would not meet him. Can this be the Mr. Melville of whom every one speaks so highly—but, Mr. Lovell, you'll promise me to be temperate in your explanation with him.

Lov. We have no time to make promises now—but be not alarmed—he and his friends are too busily employed to be watching here.

Enter GIUSEPPE.

Gius. My little Lucy promised to meet me here at this hour; what a charming evening! ma foi! I could almost fancy I was out of this vulgar climate of the John Bulls'.

Soph. Let us retire for a moment.

Lov. Its only my servant.

Soph. But he may inform Mr. Melville, let us retire.

Lov. As you please—(*They retire behind a corner of the house*).

Enter LUCY.

Gius. What ! you are come at last—ah, ma chere Lucy, if you loved me but half as well as I love you, you would not have kept me an hour in this way.

Lucy. An hour ! signore !

Gius. By my watch, upon my honor.

Lucy. Why, the truth is, I should have been here before—but Lord ! I could not help telling my mistress and Miss Emily what I heard from you this morning about my master's concubine.

Gius. The holy virgin ! you have not surely ?

Lucy. But I have though—Lord ! if you had seen how my poor mistress took on—she almost went into fits—as arrant a harlot as any in the land, said I; then Miss Emily bid me stop, but my mistress cried out, no, let me know the worst —Yes, that you shall, my lady, says I, and its a great pity, so it is, that such dirty trollops should be suffered in a christian country.

Gius. And what was the answer of madame Melville ?

Lucy. She could not answer at all, but went out of the room with such a look. Miss Emily followed her, and then I began to think of you, Mr. Giuseppe.

Gius. Ma foi—how twilight becomes you, and

when shall we have the parson to make us happy,
my dear girl?

Lucy. But the money, Mr. Giuseppe.

Gius. Mon Dieu ! I thought we had settled that point. There is your forty pounds you know—we will set off with that—added to the contributions I shall from time to time levy on my master's folly.

Lov. A precious rascal this !

Gius. It will carry us through the first year.

Lucy. Yes, to be sure, we had a pretty good specimen of your poor master this morning.

Lov. Highly amusing, indeed !

Gius. Sancta Maria bless you ! it was but two months ago, when we were leaving—what was her name ?—it began with a W, I remember ; before we set off, I just told him I saw a tear in Mademoiselle's eye—no such thing to be sure. Sacre Dieu—he gave me in a moment a coat he had hardly worn, two pair of breeches, three pair of silk stockings, a hat almost new ; and, to crown all, a five-guinea note, calling me the best servant in the world.

Lov. What a dupe I have been ! its well I know you, villain !

Gius. But, come—don't you see the moon is rising, let us walk into the wood.

Lucy. Lord ! how pleasant it will be ! *Exeunt.*

Lov. They are gone ; come, come, Sophia, confide in me, there is no danger.

Soph. Footsteps again !

Enter MELVILLE and SETTLE.

Lov. This corner will conceal us. (*They retire*)

Mel. That Burgundy was sour, Settle.

Sett. I never drank better.

Mel. Then I suppose my taste is out of order, for I thought it detestable.

Sett. Why really, Melville, nothing goes well with you to-day—you have been a wretched companion; you, whom wine used to exhilarate almost to madness, who have always laughed at me for being so calm over my glass, you hated a fellow who could get drunk in silence—this you called sottishness.

Mel. I could not talk this evening, I made a struggle at first, but it was ineffectual—that beautiful creature, Settle.

Sett. Whom do you mean; Melville?

Mel. Whom do I mean? my incognita, to be sure.

Sett. Not one momentary thought on any other?

Mel. Not one, not one.

Sett. What! you are perfectly easy on her account.

Mel. Can't you believe my positive assertion?

Sett. Certainly—yet I own I did suppose I saw a little wavering in you, a little perplexity, a sort of balancing, which you tried to decide by

bumper after bumper—hah! hah! hah! who has the advantage now? the calm captain Settle, or the susceptible Charles Melville; the one master of himself, able to enjoy and entertain, (these are foolish words to be sure, but they are common, and I must use them) to enjoy and entertain the company; the other absent, lost, the only dull fellow at his own table.

Mel. Such men as you are stupid in your best moments.

Sett. But then we make no pretensions.

Mell. Well, well, I know I am but a rascal—I know I treat the best woman in the world scandalously—but after this one frolic, I swear I'll be the most affectionate, dutiful husband living; and if I take such an oath in my cups, what shall I do when I am sober—eh, Settle?

Sett. But why not take the present opportunity of making something like a sacrifice.

Mel. No, no, that would be too much, too much to expect; I am unusually elevated, Settle; that Burgundy was good wine, after all—it begins to mount. I wish I was a sailor—what a pleasure there must be in a storm, from the very buoyancy of your motion.

Sett. It may be so, but I had rather sail with a clear sky, and where the anchorage is firm.

Mel. Now imagine me, Settle, at my fair one's feet, swearing she shall be mine—mine, without any vulgar ties that bind estates—not hearts;

that fix our interests, but destroy our love; that by making the connexion sure, remove all fear of displeasure, and all wish to serve—pshaw! pshaw! I know I am talking nonsense.

Sett. I won't contradict you.

Mel. Swearing this, I rise, and clasping her in my arms—

Sett. She, with a frown of indignation darts from you, and you become the animal in the fable, not content with one precieux morceau, and losing all.

Lov. There is no bearing this.

Soph. Be calm, I entreat you—for my sake be calm.

Lov. If I forgive him!

Sett. What, lost in thought, Melville! if she is the character you represent her to be.

Mel. Its very true, but I can't talk to her—my tongue is tied in her presence, there is something in her that awes me into respect and distance.

Lov. Aye, there it is, such virtue forces a reluctant homage.

Mel. Yet her disguise, her silence! her wandering about my grounds, I can't be mistaken—impossible—no, no, every body tells me I am the victim of romance; another bottle, and then Settle, I shall be so divinely eloquent.

Sett. I have my doubts.

Mel. What doubts—innocence would have no need of all this artifice; but to-morrow, Settle.

Sett. What of to-morrow?

Mel. To-morrow I'll send you to her calmly to persuade her to explain herself.

Sett. And what then?

Mel. Why, then, I'll step in myself, and shew her the difference between a man and an automaton.

Sett. You surely won't detain her still.

Mel. I'll answer all your questions to-morrow —no more wine; farewell Settle, farewell icicle—

Exit.

Sett. We shall have this fiery Hotspur on the earth before night. *Exit.*

Soph. Oh! I am very faint, I can scarcely walk.

Lov. Think of the insults you have escaped, how near you are to a place of refuge, and take courage.

Soph. I must rest a moment, what language did I hear? how many horrors awaited me, oh! my noble, my generous protector!

Lov. Come, come, bear up.

Soph. My head turns round, I know nothing distinctly.

Lov. Rest, rest on me.

Exeunt.

SCENE IV.—SOPHIA'S *apartments.**Enter MELVILLE.*

Mel. The door is safely locked, I find. This is a singular adventure of mine; my fair one is most agreeably inaccessible—but I fancy fifty guineas will have more effect than all my rhetoric—now for her room.

*Exit.**Re-enter MELVILLE.*

Mel. She's not there, she's gone; who waits? William! Thomas!

Enter a SERVANT.

Where's the man I ordered not to leave the door of this room? send him to me; do not return without him.

Ser. Sir, I'll do all I can to find him.

Mel. Where are you going, fool? come back—send all my servants to me, every one, don't let one be missing; away, be quick. *Exit.*

Servant) To have lived to the age of three and twenty, and after all to be tricked by a — it's monstrous!

Enter two SERVANTS.

Away, away, be quick, seek her throughout the country, bring her back, I charge you. I'll have her proclaimed at the church doors—I'll—

Enter SETTLE.

Sett. Melville, positively you make such a noise, you have disturbed a sweet doze that was just stealing upon me under the old oak.

Mel. (*Seizing SETTLE by the collar*) You, Settle, are engaged in this plot against me; you told me you had your doubts.

Sett. Nay, Melville, take your hand from my throat, for though I doubt of the propriety of duelling, I know of nothing so calculated to remove my doubts as attempting to strangle me.

Mel. I had forgot, its your way of thinking; (*to the servants*) why are you not gone?

Ser. Sir, you have given us no orders.

Mel. Did I not? Hear me, then, and obey me strictly; if you fail, you forfeit my favour for ever; take your stations in different parts of the park—if you meet the prettiest girl you ever saw in your lives, just five feet four in height, dressed like a chambermaid, but in air and manner equal to any dignity; with a complexion that seems to evade your glance by its sweet variety; a blue

eye, armed with the two-fold lightning of love and anger, and a lip that vainly attempts to cheat its nature in efforts of scorn; brown hair, rather dishevelled, and playing on a neck whiter—

Sett. But as it's almost dark, how are they to see all this?

Mel. Go, go, bring her back; but observe me, use no violence, keep a strict guard over your hands.

Sett. Yes, give Mr. Melville's compliments, and request the honor of her company in her prison.

Mel. Away, be sure you bring her back—

Exeunt Servants.

Enter LOVECHILD.

Heaven and earth! Lovechild!

Sett. The prologue to the tragedy. *Aside.*

Lovc. You are, no doubt, surprized, Mr. Melville—my appearance, I can well believe, is unseasonable enough. What! sir—did you imagine, that because my daughter had no brother whose quicker blood would boil at this injury.

Mel. Injury?

Lovc. For heaven's sake, don't irritate me by attempting an apology; you are married to my daughter, sir, and now I find all your servants employed in searching for your woman, sir—I can't take my evening walk by the side of the water here, in your grounds, sir, yes, sir, my

daughter's grounds, without having a thousand impertinent questions put to me. What, am I to be made a pimp in my old age, and to my own son-in-law?

Mel. How have I been infatuated?

Lovoc. Had the affair been managed with the least secrecy, perhaps I might have forgiven you, though I hope to God Louisa never would have so degraded herself; but now the whole country will hear of it, and I am at least an equal sufferer with her—my vengeance, however, shall be bolder.

Mel. Sir, I shall not shrink from it, this imperious language has roused me. *Aside.*

Lovoc. Now, too, I understand all those mean and paltry subterfuges you practised on me this morning—I own I had no suspicions, because I thought I had to do with a man of honor.

Mel. You speak boldly, sir,

Lovoc. Not more boldly than I shall be ready to justify.

Mel. Its very well, sir; another time, then.

Lovoc. I understand you—and I assure you I rejoice in leaving you—another time.

Mel. For heaven's sake don't mistake me; I meant no insult, no provocation.

Lovoc. Yes, sir, perhaps on this occasion you'll find my arm as vigorous as a younger man's.

Exit.

Sett. Truly this is a most unfortunate affair.

Mel. You won't be called upon to bear a share in it.

Sett. Melville, what a pleasure there must be in a storm, from the mere buoyancy of the motion.

Mel. No, no, its false, its false, oh ! should he persuade her to leave me—should I lose her !

Sett. Lose whom ?

Mel. This is no time for raillery.

Sett. Oh ! these pleasurable passions of hope and love. It can't be denied there was an astonishing air of resolution in the old gentleman's look.

Mel. What, did he seem resolutely fixed.

Sett. I never saw a more unforgiving aspect in my life.

Mel. It is so—I've lost her for ever—I know he never will forgive me—oh ! by heaven—I would give up my whole fortune to recall this cursed day. *Exit.*

Sett. I must follow him—in this frenzy he may commit some violent act upon himself.

Exit.



SCENE IV.—*An apartment in the house.*

MRS. MELVILLE and EMILY.

Emily. How can you possibly put such con-

fidence in Lucy's report—there is no story too preposterous for her credulity.

Mrs. Mel. I know not what to think—sometimes I fondly flatter myself he cannot be so degraded—but then his dependants love him so entirely, they would spread no groundless reports to his disadvantage.

Emily. Wait with patience, I entreat you

Mrs. Mel. Patience—its impossible—this—this suspense is worse than certainty on any terms.

Enter LOVELL and SOPHIA.

Soph. My dear Mrs. Melville.

Mrs. Mel. Sophia!

Soph. Don't interrupt me—don't ask me a single question—don't say one word to me—I am dying till I tell you what brought me here.

Mrs. Mel. I am very glad to see you at all events.

Soph. My mother-in-law—ah, you may laugh at me, if you will, but hear me—my mother-in-law, you know, since my father's death, has always treated me with the greatest austerity—of late she has been peculiarly severe—the other day she told me she meant to pay a visit to Bath—I rejoiced at her determination, as it was likely to give me an opportunity of seeing you—I said so to her, but she threatened to deprive me of that pleasure—well, she teased, and tormented me more than ever, all the journey—a

long two-hundred miles—however, when I got to Bath, I resolved to bear her persecutions no longer, so early this morning I borrowed this disguise, slipped out of the house, threw myself into the first public conveyance I could find, which set me down at your park gate.

Lov. Then Mr. Melville, instead of receiving you, as you had reason to expect, offered you the most atrocious insult.

Mrs. Mel. Is it possible!

Lov. And absolutely confined you—imprisoned you—infected the air you breathed with his poisonous addresses.

Emily. But I am sure Mr. Melville did not know you.

Soph. No, indeed, he did not.

Emily. Oh why did you not tell him your name.

Lov. What, condescend to throw herself upon his mercy! confide in him when he had so grossly offended her.

Emily. You are severe, Mr. Lovell—yet if inconstancy were my brother's only fault, you are surely the last man to condemn him.

Lov. (Aside) I was not quite prepared for that rebuke.

Emily. Well, sir, only judge Mr. Melville by whatever maxims you propose for yourself, and I shall be satisfied.

Mrs. Mel. How ungenerous! how unmanly! I can never look upon him again with any feel-

ings but those of indignation—my former life was one continued scene of joy and cheerfulness —of late a warmer glow brightened and varied its colours—sometimes disappearing for a moment, but never totally lost—alas ! what a miserable future did not the changing gleam forebode.

Exit.

Emily. My dearest Louisa. (*Exit following*)

Soph. I did not foresee this distress—I begin to repent of my mysterious silence.

Lov. You were right—perfectly right—had you acted otherwise, your conduct would have been inconsistent with your character—as for Mrs. Melville, she ought to be obliged to you for shewing her the character of the man she has to live with.

Soph. That should have been done before marriage.

Enter LOVECHILD, followed by a SERVANT.

Lovec. Order my carriage directly—I won't stay another moment in the house—no not another moment—(*Exit servant*)—What, Mr. Lovell ! and who is this ?

Lov. This, sir, is Miss Woodville, whom I have the honor to intro—

Lovec. Miss Woodville, is it—egad, I did not know who or what she might be—Mr. Melville may have a thousand for any thing I know —Where is my daughter ? *Exit.*

Lov. Are these insults never to cease? if I forgive him. *(Aside going out.)*

Soph. Nay—take me with you, and don't put on that frowning countenance—really its a hideous mask. *Exeunt.*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.—SCENE I.

*An Apartment.*MELVILLE, *with a letter.*

Mel. Have I then lost her? How insupportably wretched have I made myself. Well, well, let me read her letter once more, though every syllable is a dagger to me. “ You will “ not be surprised at my father’s wish, or rather “ commands, that I should return home with “ him. Why indeed should I disobey him?—“ to him and him alone, I must devote the re-“ mainder of a life, which, in all probability, “ will not be much longer than his. Farewell, “ I do not mean to reproach you; on the con-“ trary, if you should ever regret the loss of her “ who loved you, as she hopes, most sincerely, “ let this be a consolation to you, that from the “ bottom of her soul she herself forgave you. “ You will not, I am sure, insist upon a per-“ sonal interview—it could answer no purpose “ but to increase the anguish which already I “ can scarcely bear.

LOUISA MELVILLE.” .

My excellent, ever excellent Louisa !

Enter MELLEFONT and EMILY.

Mel. Would to God, Mellefont, I had taken your advice, it would have saved me from the most abominable folly ever man was guilty of—folly, do I call it?

Emily. I am sorry, my old school-fellow,

Mel. There again, that I should have insulted your friend, Emily—my wife's friend, an innocent, artless girl.

Mellef. You see, Melville, the ruin I have often foretold, is at length come upon you. You may now be convinced how far a man may advance in error, how much misery he may spread around him; and yet escape the vengeance of the law. Yet, is it not a crime of less magnitude to attack a stranger on the high road, than thus heedlessly to indulge a wayward temper at the hazard of wounding the affections and breaking the hearts of our best and dearest friends?

Mel. Most true—most true.

Emily Come, come—Mellefont—mingle some compassion with your moral indignation—you must confess Sophia's silence was most preposterous—you poor wife indeed! *(to Melville.)*

Mel. Yes, yes, she must detest and abhor me—are you not surprized, Emily, that I should dare to appear before you who know her so well, and how I have offended her. Well, farewell to

you both ; may you enjoy that happiness which insanity only like mine could have deprived me of.

Emily. Nay, stay, Melville, I am sure there can be no cause for this despair.

Mel. Read that letter—see with what a devilish power I have banished the gaiety of innocence from a bosom whose pure and delicate affection should have been reflected back from mine.

Exit.

Emily. Really there is an air of determination in this letter which surprizes me.

Mel. Yet it is free from anger.

Emily. For that reason it shocks me the more.

Mellef. I own I have my fears.

Emily. Good heavens ! say not so ; but come, let us exert our utmost endeavours to procure a reconciliation ; it is necessary, I am sure, for the happiness of all parties. You have some weight with my father, I know he has the highest opinion of you—go to him. I depend greatly upon my entreaties with Louisa.

Mellef. Ever the same, my love.

Emily. We must be expeditious : my father, I find, has determined to return home with my sister and myself this very evening.

Mellef. At so late an hour ?

Emily. I never saw him more resolved—and my sister, in her anger, has promised to obey him implicitly in every thing. *Exit Emily.*

Enter LOVECHILD meeting MELLEFONT.

Mellef. The very man I desired to see.

Lovec. I am sorry I can't return the compliment—I never wish to see the face of any man again. I am disgraced—dishonoured—I don't suppose any man will like to see my face again, except it is to laugh at me.

Mellef. Be moderate, my good Sir.

Lovec. What, you mean to defend such a conduct, that you may practise it in your turn, but I'll take care of that; poor Louisa's gone, but Emily, I'm determined, shall never marry at all.

Mellef. Really I hardly understand you.

Lovec. Why, sir, do you affect to be surprised at the anger of a man who sees his daughter's husband keeping a woman under her very nose.

Mellef. Keeping a woman! you astonish me.

Lovec. And this too when the father is in the house with him. Its hard to say whether the blow is harder upon my daughter or me—her affections are wounded—my honour is equally so.

Mellef. Will you allow me to ask you a question?

Lovec. As many as you please—I am perfectly cool—I see what I am -doing; I am not talking from passion, like one of you, boys; I see what I am doing, I know where I am—

would to God I was any where else. I am not in my dotage, my young spark; ask away, and I will answer you if I think proper.

Mellef. Well then, can you seriously imagine that Melville designed to keep a woman, as you call it?

Lovet. Then pray, sir, what the devil did he mean?

Mellef. If he really had such a design, he must be the greatest fool under heaven, forconcerting his measures so as to be sure of detection; might he not have waited till you had left his house, and could none of his tenant's cottages have afforded him a more secure retreat than that he chose.

Lovet. And so the matchless impudence of his conduct is in his favour.

Mellef. In judging of one particular action of any man, are you to leave his general character entirely out of the question?

Lovet, None of this abstruse nonsense to me, sir; I was bred in the army—none of your college-bred fantasies, your cursed cob-web reasonings—I am too old a fly to be caught in them.

Mellef. You must excuse me for saying, that your interpretation of Melville's conduct is as unworthy of yourself as of him.

Lovet. Aye, indeed? how so, sir?

Mellef. Because a moment's reflection will shew you its injustice.

Lover. And now, most worthy, gentle, candid sir, will you shew me what you make of it.

Mellef. I know enough of him to be assured that this woman, whom you fancy he would have kept, had she been what he supposed, would not have interrupted his fidelity to your daughter a single day, and I believe in my conscience he would have confessed his fault to Mrs. Melville, and implored her pardon.

Lover. Yes, he is always prodigal enough of his confessions and his repentance, but what advantage are we to derive from these, if they do not save him from fresh errors; upon my soul I believe he repents, not so much in sorrow for past faults, as by way of apology for future ones.

Mellef. Really, if you make a good use of this affair, it may be the means of his entire re-form; consider for a moment—he is easily unriddled—in the midst of one of his unfortunate caprices, which, as Mrs. Melville forgives them, I don't see who else has a right to complain of them.

Lover. Yes, sir, a father has.

Mellef. A circumstance occurs, which, if he lives a hundred years, will never happen again—partly from a nonsensical resentment, partly from the gaiety of his disposition.

Lover. So the Lady's beauty had nothing to do with it.

Mellef. And partly, as you say, from the attraction of the girl herself.

Lovec. I understand what you would say—this was one of your momentary errors, one of your damned, venial, amiable faults. I don't know what I might think as an indifferent person, but I am determined, positively determined—I don't take it well in you, that you palliate this behaviour before me—but, thank God, Emily is not married, they shall both go home with me this very evening; they were once happy enough with me.

Enter DAZZLE.

Daz. Ah, Mr. Lovechild, what, inexorable? I know what you are talking about, I have heard all from Miss Lovechild. Let me tell you, sir, a woman with so many charms as Mrs. Melville, should have a clever fellow to know how to estimate them, and a brave fellow to dare to defend them—what—separate Mr. and Mrs. Melville? a pair that seem brought from the ends of the world purposely for each other—she, gentle, affectionate, sensible—he, with all the bolder excellencies of the man to support her—he has his faults, but when he has gone through a little more of the world's discipline (and he is a sort of man that crouds into a day the experience of a year) he will be most ad-

mirable—he is the soul of generosity—the child of honor—I hate a fellow who was never young—he is like a dull Italian year, where the trees are always in leaf, and where the only way of knowing the difference of the seasons, is by referring to the almanack. The inconstancy of the spring may surely be excused, for the steady warmth of summer, and the rich plenty of autumn—then comes the hoar of winter, old Gentleman, and closes the scene not ungracefully.

Mellef. (Aside) Thank you, thank you, Dazzle.

Lovoc. Well, Gentlemen, I am not a stock—I am not made of flint. I used to think of him as you do, and if it were not for the publicity of his conduct,

Mellef. Its publicity? Does the world deserve such a sacrifice as you would make to it.

Lovoc. I don't know—but I should not like to have it said, that the man who married my daughter, insulted her before her father's eyes, without any resentment on his part. My name is ancient, gentlemen—it has never yet been tarnished, it has past through many generations without a stain, and it is hard, very hard, that having triumphed so long, infamy should overtake it at last—when, if it was suffered to escape a few years longer, it would be beyond the reach, whether of shame or glory—you must excuse me for leaving you; this subject grows painful to me.

Exit.

Mellef. You almost overthrew him, Dazzle.

Daz. Aye, if the fear of the world's censure had not parried my blow.

Mellef. There it is, this is the feeling, which follows us almost from our cradles, and sticks to our last sand.

Daz. However, let us make another attempt.

Mellef. Certainly.

Exeunt.

SCENE II.—*An apartment.*

MRS. MELVILLE and EMILY.

Mrs. Mel. Why will you persist in entreaties which I cannot listen to?

Emily. How can I be silent on a subject so interesting to me? Believe me you carry your resentment much too far.

Mrs. Mel. You forget, Emily, what is due to our sex. What must I think of a man whose conduct is now as indelicate, as it has frequently been unjust? Must I meet him with the smile of a hypocrite, and profess to love, where I cannot even esteem? If I could condescend so low, Melville would be ten times more wretched, than in losing me entirely. And pray, Emily, if Mr. Mellefont had acted as Charles has done, would you have pardoned him.

Emily. I don't think my anger would have been so persevering.

Mrs. Mel. Anger! you know me too well seriously to impute my conduct to such a cause, and, let me say, I should have expected in a sister a kinder and more indulgent friend.

Emily. I may perhaps be too urgent, but I cannot bear to see you sacrifice Melville's happiness—your own too, Louisa.

Mrs. Mel. My happiness! alas!

Emily. Then let me be the messenger of your forgiveness to Charles, and thus restore it; never should I be so proud as of such an office.

Mrs. Mel. No, do not mistake me,—I know you are astonished at my firmness—I am generally thought light, and trifling, and frivolous, perhaps justly so—yet I think I shall not change the resolution I have made—when you marry, my poor father will be left alone and desolate—he, I believe, will set some value upon my attentions.

Emily. I declare Melville has taught you to talk so exactly like him.

Mrs. Mel. Am I, am I like him?

Enter SOPHIA.

Soph. I am so alarmed—for heaven's sake, Miss Lovechild, go to Mr. Mellefont, he can persuade Mr. Lovell to any thing.

Emily. But what frightens you?

Soph. Some expressions that Mr. Lovell inadvertently dropped just now.

Emily. I understand you—but I can't let you leave him.

Soph. This moment he passed me in the hall, and his countenance was so changed, he could hardly afford me a smile.

Mrs. Mel. Good heavens!

Enter SETTLE.

Sett. Three women, I protest, if I can but make my escape. (*going.*)

Emily. Mr. Settle, Mr. Settle.

Sett. Ah, I was afraid the attempt would be in vain. (*Aside.*)

Emily. Do you know where Mr. Lovell is?

Soph. Where is Mr. Mellefont?

Sett. Now which shall I answer first?

Emily. Yes, can you tell me where Mr. Mellefont is?

Sett. If you'll step out of the room, you'll hear him in the opposite parlour, for he and Mr. Lovechild have been engaged for this half hour in such a noisy dispute, that I will answer for it there is not a servant in the house who does not know the subject of it.

Emily. Then come, Sophia, let us go to him.

Mrs. Mel. Emily, for heaven's sake, return to me.

Emily. Depend upon me.

Exeunt Sophia and Emily.

Mrs. Mel. What is this alarm? Is it possible

that any affection should still lurk in my heart after such a wound ? Alas ! and alas ! that a man, capable of inspiring an everlasting attachment, should make it uncertain if it is not a duty to hate him.

Exit.

Sett. On my conscience this house is a perfect Bedlam ;—here is Melville mad from despair—old Lovechild mad from anger—Dazzle was stung by a tarantula in Italy, and has never recovered it—as to Lovell and the women, they are always mad—Mellesfont's wits seem to be on the balance, and if I was not going away to-morrow morning, I should have some alarms for myself. As I live, here comes one of the unfortunate creatures without either chains or keeper.

Enter LOVELL.

Lov. Mr. Settle, I hope you will excuse the liberty I am going to take.

Sett. Oh, the paroxysm seems passed—he is pretty temperate I sec.

Lov. If you will be kind enough to deliver this note to Mr. Melville.

Sett. It is of an amicable nature, Mr. Lovell?

Lov. It is to demand satisfaction for an injury which cannot be easily repaired—if on so short an acquaintance I may venture.

Sett. One duel in four and twenty hours is enough for any man.

Lov. Well, but, Mr. Settle, to whom else can I apply?

Sett. It is not very surprizing, if in a gentleman's own house, his guests are too polite to request him to run the hazard of his life. But here's Mr. Mellefont—apply to him.

Enter MELLEFONT.

Mellef. So, Lovell, you think it necessary to send Melville a challenge.

Sett. I am completely disengaged from this affair, Mr. Lovell. *Exit.*

Lov. I don't see how I could possibly act otherwise.

Mellef. Yet I think there are some pretty strong reasons for keeping the peace.

Lov. This is not the first time to day I have been the subject of your ridicule.

Mellef. Well, then, to be serious, when Melville is oppressed with affliction, when he is already suffering as much as any reasonable enemy could wish, would you add to the weight that presses upon upon him.

Lov. But do I owe nothing to Sophia.

Mellef. Why, to say the truth, on considering Melville's conduct to her, I find there are so many contrary claims to settle, so much to blame on both sides, that silence and oblivion are our only resources.

Lov. What! did she deserve to be insulted by his profligate addresses?

Mellef. Pray, be calm—I have made myself hoarse with endeavouring to persuade Lovechild to consult his own happiness, though without success; I don't blame Miss Woodville for leaving a severe step-mother, and seeking for refuge with Mrs. Melville, but why did she not immediately declare her name? you well know Melville would have been her most ardent friend.

Lov. That is true, but her pride was justly excited by the rudeness of his first address.

Mellef. I must observe, that pride hardly became her in the situation in which she stood.

Lov. And was it so difficult a matter to perceive the purity of her character—is it not marked in every feature, in every gesture? who could mistake the glance of virtuous indignation, from such eyes as her's, for artifice and coquetry?

Mellef. And from this you would insinuate, that Melville's mistake was wilful—that he knew her character, and perhaps her name; you surely cannot be in earnest, and now, consider the consequences of the conduct you wish to adopt—how completely you will break up our society.

Lov. Well, I'll not fight him.

Mellef. Otherwise, when Mrs. Melville is reconciled to Charles, which yet I don't despair of, when you have married Sophia her friend—

Lov. I tell you again, I would not fight him, though he should beg it as a favour—poor fellow—where is he—fight him? fight Charles

Melville? Oh, my dear Mellefont! let me thank you a thousand times for having saved me from an action which would have embittered all the days of my life.

Mellef. Now let us go and remove the fears of the ladies. *Exit.*

As LOVELL follows—Enter GIUSEPPE.

Gius. I come, sir, in obedience to your commands.

Lov. Yes, I have something to say to you.

Gius. Miss Lucy will be here presently, sir. Your most kind offers of assistance will make us grateful to you for ever.

Lov. You come in good time, for if you were twice as great a villain as you are, which, to be sure, I believe is impossible, I could not find fault with you now.

Gius. Ma foi, monsieur.

Lov. What! you are puzzled a little? all I beg of you is, that you will be pleased to remove that hypocritical countenance as soon as you can.

Gius. But, indeed, sir.

Lov. I tell you, I know you, you are an active, bustling fellow, and have been of some use to me in travelling, but you have your faults—you cheat confoundedly, and lie infernally.

Gius. May I presume, sir, to entreat you to speak a little lower, for, though you know me, it is not necessary that all the world should have the same information.

Lov. Go, go, and let me see no more of you,
as for Miss Lovechild's woman, I shall take care
she is not the dupe of your artifices. *Exit.*

Gius. She certainly knows me. *Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Another apartment.*

MELVILLE *alone.*

Mel. So, by Settle's account, Lovell, as well
as old Lovechild, means to challenge me—well,
be it so, one of them will surely take good aim,
and then this dreadful misery will be over.

Enter LOVECHILD.

Lovc. Aye, there he is—egad he is the pic-
ture of woe—the colonel did not deceive me
—delightfully miserable—charmingly oppressed,
as I live—on my conscience, if he would but
make an apology, and submissively ask my for-
giveness, I think I should pardon him after all.
Mr. Melville, while the horses are getting ready,
I am just come to bid you farewell.

Mel. Its a favour, which, after the imperious
language you used just now, I own I did not
expect.

Lovc. (*Aside.*) As proud as ever I perceive.
Well, Mr. Melville, as to the mode of vengeance

my anger first suggested to me, as I am growing old, and as I don't wish to carry resentment with me to my grave, I willingly relinquish it.

Mel. As you please, sir.

Lovec. As you please, sir? Zounds! don't you think yourself obliged to me?

Mel. Infinitely, for kindly condescending to spare a life you have rendered a burthen to me.

Lovec. I'faith—I must forgive him, poor fellow—though not immediately—he shall have one sleepless night I am determined. (*Aside.*) And now, Mr. Melville, having accomplished one purpose of my visit, which was to inform you of the alteration in my intention as to calling you out—I have only to bid you farewell.

Mel. Sir, your most obedient.

Lovec. And won't—won't you give me your hand, Charles? Egad I shall go too far—I must be gone. Mr. Melville, farewell. *Exit.*

Mel. I am resolved I will see Louisa before she leaves me, though all the fathers on earth oppose me.

(*Rings the bell.*)

Enter SERVANT.

Is Mr. Lovechild's carriage ready?

Ser. It will be at the door immediately, sir.

Mel. Do you know where Miss Lovechild is?

Ser. Sir, I have just seen her leave the draw-

ing-room, where she had been sitting with my mistress.

Mel. Who else was in the drawing-room.

Ser. No one.

Mel. You may go (*Exit Servant.*) now, if my lips are but faithful to my feelings I may still perhaps be happy.

Exit.

SCENE IV.—*Another apartment.*

MRS. MELVILLE.

Mrs. Mel. I wish I was gone—every thing in this house makes me so dreadfully nervous—and if I meet Melville, I shall sink into the earth.

Enter MELVILLE.

Mel. What! Louisa, do you start at seeing me?

Mrs. Mel. I own I am a little surprized, after my letter.

Mel. Do not measure my conduct by the cold rules of politeness and decorum—I am come to you with a mind agonized almost to madness—yet, perhaps, in entreating your pardon for one offence, I but commit a new one—oh! Louisa!

the principal characteristic of this unfortunate nature is pride—yet I am humbled—humbled to the earth by your anger.

Mrs. Mel. Anger—never were the feelings of resentment so far from me as at this instant ; but why did not this same pride defend you from a conduct every way beneath you, and which could lead to such a humiliation.

Mel. It was a monstrous error—a crime—you cannot paint it in darker colours than those in which I view it myself—but surely the distress I have felt at the thought of losing you, may prove that my love for you has never changed.

Mrs. Mel. And yet if you had hated me, you could not have chosen a more effectual mode of shewing your dislike.

Mel. Dislike!—hated you? would you accuse me of dissembling, and dissembling with you. Oh ! if this dreadful day had passed without a discovery of my fault—if my better fortune had covered my conduct with the obscurity to which only it belongs, to-morrow, I am sure, I should have confessed all to you, and entreated your forgiveness as I do now.

Mrs. Mel. And would not your cooler judgment have despised me if I had granted your request?

Mel. I should have recollect ed innumerable instances of that proud delicacy, your best and most brilliant ornament; but I should have recollect ed too, your generous affection, your con-

stant love, confiding in itself, proudly disregarding the censure of those who are too faulty themselves, to trust in the repentance of others.

Mrs. Mel. Really you'll make me think just now that I am the offender, and you my judge.

Mel. Impossible!—before you, Louisa, I am nothing—my affection for you is so rootedly fixed, it is so mingled with all my feelings, all my thoughts, that by leaving me you seem to tear me from myself; when I think of what I was before my marriage, the perpetual victim of extravagant hopes and ill-executed schemes, from my own sex expecting acts of friendship which we only read of in romance—from your's a warmth of attachment—

Mrs. Mel. Which also we only read of in romance.

Mel. No, no, you realized all my fondest hopes, my gaudiest dreams.

Mrs. Mel. Do you think I believe all this.

Mel. You must believe it—that tear tells me you believe it.

Mrs. Mel. Indeed I cannot refrain from weeping when I think how formed you are to make me happy, and how much I suffer with you. When we married, I laughed at the gloomy prophecies of my friends—they talked of your irregularities, your caprices—I thought they only envied me. I had perceived, indeed, that your affection, though ardent, was variable, but I ascribed its inconstancy more to your uncertainty

with regard to my love, than to your disposition. Since our marriage I have hardly dared to own, even to myself, that I was deceived ; and, heaven knows with what triumph I have waited till your conviction of my everlasting attachment to you, should have rendered your affection as durable as it was warm—but now all is past, and I have only to lament, in solitude, the weakness of my efforts, so inadequate in arresting the regard of him I could have loved for ever.

Mel. Have mercy, mercy—I entreat you !—Put me to the trial once more—covered as I am with all the weaknesses and infirmities of our nature, I will not dare to make protestations, but surely my love can never vary, strengthened as it must be with feelings of esteem, encreasing every moment, and the sincerest and deepest gratitude.

Mrs. Mel. But what will my father say ?

Mel. You know he has no object but your happiness, and no will but yours.

Mrs. Mel. But you have wounded him in so nice a point—in driving him to the protection of his child, you have put him upon ground of which he is so jealous—

Mel. Gracious heaven ! that any protection should have been found necessary for you, but that which I afforded you—but will you forgive me.

Mrs. Mel. Are you afraid I should retract ?

Mel. No, no.

Mrs. Mel. What then—after all I am an imprudent creature.

Enter LOVECHILD.

Lovec. Come, Louisa, the coach is at the door—come, come long.

Mrs. Mel. But Melville declares I shall not go.

Lovec. Not go? but I say you shall go, what right has he to prevent you from coming to your father's house, when he makes your own worse than a dungeon to you; not a husband's I am sure—he has forfeited that title long—I was in hopes you never would have seen him again; you have been miserable enough already with him—come, come along Louisa.

Mrs. Mel. I have forgiven him.

Lovec. Forgiven him!

Mel. Your confidence, my dear sir, is more than I can expect, yet with all this excellence, as my security—

Lovec. Forgiven him—it's impossible, Louisa—he'll break your heart—you know he'll break your heart—and so, sir, you think a few fine speeches a compensation for your conduct.

Mel. No, no, indeed—if you had been strictly just, I should have been lost for ever.

Lovec. There again—why, Louisa—look at him—can you trust that stern, rigid, inflexible

countenance of his—did you ever see such a wintry aspect as the rogue has—but if you have forgiven him, to be sure there is no more to be said—so, there's my hand, Charles—and there's my daughter, my boy—and if you quarrel again, why egad, you must contrive a reconciliation as well as you can.

Enter EMILY and MELLEFONT.

All's right again, my dear Mellefont, here they are.

Enter SETTLE.

Sett. What does Mellefont mean by collecting us all together in this room?

Lovel. All's right, gentlemen—strew the ground with flowers—let the bells ring till the steeple totters—I'll have you married to-morrow, Emily. If the parson is able to get through the service; if he does not stammer out every line, so as to be perfectly unintelligible from mere joy, I'll never speak to him again.

Sett. Well done, old gentleman.

Enter LOVELL, SOPHIA, and DAZZLE.

Mel. I had forgotten.

Lov. Come, Melville, do not turn away, here is one, who remembers an offence but to forgive it.

Sophia. Mr. Melville, I am sure, will not pay me so poor a compliment as to imagine I can resent a conduct, of which I myself was the principal occasion.

Mel. (*Aside.*) I never was so oppressed in my life. I shall study to deserve your good opinion. (*bows.*)

Daz. (*to Settle*) Mr. Settle, we are oddly left out here.

Sett. I don't understand it, but I am going away to-morrow.

Daz. And I this very evening—for I see, in this house a single man's a monster that nobody comprehends. I'll be with you in a month again, properly qualified. Really we are all got together here like actors at the end of a play; and indeed, if the scenes of Melville-house were in the hands of a fellow who could write, they would not be amiss on the stage. Farewell, till I introduce some happy creature to you under the name of Mrs. Dazzle. Mr. Lovell, I congratulate you—the mistakes of love are forgotten in its rewards—and you, Mr. Lovechild, who see your best hopes and wishes accomplished in the situation of your children—and you, Mellefont, “in whom the elements are so mixed,” that with all possible happiness, you have the best security for its continuance. As for you, Melville, shall I

congratulate or condole with you—you who soar so near the sun, like the poor boy, with waxen wings. Learn, learn, my good fellow, to expect less, that you may enjoy more. Prefer a present good, to mere speculations on the future, yet shun the current of impulse, even when it attracts you with the dazzling brilliancy of romance. The torrent is admired at a distance—it is grand, awful, and sublime—but in a home view, we love a stream at once deep, and smooth, and clear—uninterrupted in its course—full, but not overflowing—or if you would rather hear the admonitions of the softer sex, remember the words of the proud and tender Julia, that beautiful creation of a resplendent genius, whose name is sacred alike to freedom and the muse. “When hearts, deserving happiness, would unite their fortune, virtue would crown them with an unfading garland of modest, hurtless flowers; but ill-judging passion will force the gaudier rose into the wreath, whose thorn offends them, when its leaves are dropt.”—And now having made my speech—farewell. *Exit.*

Mellef. It is a speech, I fear, to be applauded by the friend, rather than the moralist. I who have witnessed the misery, your conduct, Melville, has occasioned, and who have myself suffered from it's consequences, dare scarcely praise virtues which have been the means of rendering your errors so destructive. And even now, when you are thus humbled and repentant, I

warn you to be perpetually on your guard, lest your good resolutions should still be sacrificed to unfortunate impulses, and the fair promise of your life be torn away by the all-powerful, though perhaps temporary, blasts of temper and passion.

THE END.

**THE
RENOWN.
A TRAGEDY.**

TO MRS. TRENCH.

THE following Play, in which the interest chiefly depends upon a struggle between a high and honourable sentiment and the domestic feelings, you must allow me to dedicate to you. Gallantry might have pointed out a more distant object than a sister, but it is the best purpose of a dedication to offer a testimony of esteem and affection, nor is there any one to whom these sentiments so immediately direct me as to you, who have sanctioned and confirmed them by the experience of my whole life.

JAMES MASON.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MARQUIS DE EBOLI. *A Spanish Nobleman.*

DON FERDINAND. *The same.*

LORD DORMER. *{ A Young English Noble-
man.*

DESMOND. *{ An English Gentleman,
his Friend.*

TWO MONKS.

PAGE.

MARCHIONESS DE EBOLI. *{ Wife of the Mar-
quis D'Eboli.*

JULIA. *Her Daughter.*

The Scene lies in Madrid.

THE RENOWN.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment of LORD DORMER'S.*

MARQUIS DE EBOLI—LORD DORMER.

Marquis.

WHAT stronger plea can guide to firm resolve?
What heart so stern as to reject the suit
Of filial gratitude and sacred justice?
Then hear me!

L. Dor. First hear me—When to Madrid
Unknown I came, you as a friend received me;
In mem'ry of my father, whom in youth
You knew, his son you warmly welcom'd
With all the glow of hospitality.
Beneath your roof I found a splendid home,
And mid the num'rous visitors that wait
Your call, distinction fell on me—your daughter!
Could I be dull when all around admir'd?

Made to be lov'd, she fix'd my proudest hopes ;
 When I presum'd to tell my venturous passion,
 She deign'd to listen with complacency.

Mar. And trust me, sir, the sad necessity
 That rudely mocks the vision of your youth,
 Deprives my age of it's most cherish'd solace.
 The cause resistless.

L. Dor. Good my lord, forbear :
 Let me indulge in dreams of heav'nly bliss,
 Nor yet awake to misery.

Mar. To prevent
 Too rude a shock, where e'en a breath may wound,
 Where all is strung to agony or rapture,
 I wish to speak ; then listen, I entreat you.

L. Dor. I suffer and obey.
Mar. And, first, believe me,
 E'en to a father's eye your situation
 Presents no fault ; and for your character,
 So firm it rests on my esteem and love,
 That were the fickle goddess less indulgent,
 Your mind had brought an ample recompense.
 Your country is my idol—I foresaw
 My blood transmitted in a land of freedom.
 You may suppose, that, thinking thus,
 And fondly tracing, in your noble nature,
 My early friend, with warm delight I hail'd
 Your strong attachment to my child, my Julia.
 Her mother thought as I did.

L. Dor. So I hop'd.
Mar. Gaily imagination deck'd the scene.
 Our only child, of all our hopes and fears

Long the lov'd object, blest with your affection,
 In the attachment of a virtuous man,
 Had found a pledge of lasting happiness.
 So fancy weaved—with colours “dipt in heav'n.”

L. Dor. What daring hand has rent the glit-
 t'ring web ?

On my fair name has pois'nous slander breath'd,
 Bring forth the vile accuser front to front.
 Would disappointed love its pain avenge
 In mine, 'tis yours to pity, not believe.
 Would hatred its malignant rancour feed
 With my destruction, spurn its black invective.

Mar. Not so !—beyond the pow'r, far, far,
 you stand

Of slander's aim, of disappointed love,
 Of ranc'rous hate—there is another cause.

L. Edw. What dreadful cause, buried in night
 and hell,

Rises in darkness thus to blast my life ?

Mar. The marchioness :

L. Dor. Low to that name I bow.

Mar. How shall I speak the tortures of her
 spirit,

Her unshar'd agony, her mute despair ?

L. Dor. Too well prepar'd am I by sad ex-
 perience

To hear of woes no other breast has suffer'd !

Mar. Supremely blest with all that heav'n
 can give,

She only proves the world's sad vanity.

With studious eye she reads th' historic page,
 Or with the poet trembles o'er the verse.

Great nature's charms attract her wond'ring eye,
 And with their various witchery can soothe
 Or elevate her soul: form'd for the world,
 She moves along unrivall'd there,
 The loveliest star in fashion's galaxy ;
 Yet still the canker-worm of sorrow gnaws
 Her life away.

L. Dor. And wherefore are these horrors ?

Mar. There's—there's the curse of all—the
 crying evil—

In silent secrecy she mourns the past,
 And melancholy, fed in solitude,
 Adds to the weight, too heavy now to bear.
 Whate'er the source, a deep'ning gloom pervades
 Her life's proud noon—of late convulsive starts
 Shoot thro' her frame, and form a sad variety.
 Poor Julia mourns her mother's banish'd peace,
 Yet still affecting gaiety before her ;
 Oft-times she steals, where all unknown, unseen,
 She drowns herself with tears.

L. Dor. Julia in tears ?

Mar. In marrying you, my daughter will
 forsake

Her native land, and fix her home in England,
 Should Julia leave her poor despairing mother,
 What eye shall fill with quick responsive woe ?
 What voice shall pour affection's soft'ning tones.
 Or, sweetly moral, speak of joys to come ?
 No weak caprice guides Julia's firm resolve.

L. Dor. Did she, did Julia speak of separa-
 ration ?

Could she pronounce the words farewell for ever ?

Mar. The marchioness dissents, and still rejects

The sacrifice.

L. Dor. Oh! all excelling woman!
On her tranquillity my hopes shall rest;
My country should I leave, and to the land
That gave me birth, become a foreigner,
Supporting Julia in her great employ,
Objections then must vanish into air.

Mar. 'Twould be repaying ill the debt I owe
My old friend's kindness, meanly to seduce
From the high hopes, that lead to glorious fame,
His only son, and check the great career
That fancy paints before the father's eye,
Where, as the soldier, scholar, senator,
With kindling heat you fire the martial band,
Or dwell with rapture on the classic page,
Or for your country, greatly eloquent,
Pour out your soul in sacred freedom's cause.
Yourself (I err not) still ambition sways,
And love but waves a stolen sceptre o'er you.

L. Dor. Ambition's most attractive charms
are fled,

Fled with the wish of proving to the world
Your daughter's choice was not entirely worthless.

Mar. To leave untried no effort for your
marriage,
To England's shores I turn'd the sufferer's eyes,
Far from the land where she is born to grieve.

L. Dor. Refus'd she then a refuge so prepar'd,

Where fame and honor shall await her steps,
And soft affection melt o'er every pang ?

Mar. Refus'd ! shudd'rинг refus'd—refus'd
with horror.

Her quick convulsive agony declared
Some dreadful bond mysterious, that connects
Your country with her deeply settled woe.

L. Dor. Must all the golden days enjoy'd
beneath

Your happy roof, bless'd by my Julia's smiles,
Pass like a vision of the night away ?

Mar. Till on her mother's breast this night
unvaried,

Brooding with horrors never known before,
Shall dawn with better hope and rise to day.

L. Dor. Oh ! with what language shall I next
address her ?

Mar. Speak as to one, who frankly own'd her
love,

And left her father, friends, all, all, for you,
But a despairing mother.

L. Dor. Yes, be it so,

My Julia shall console her mother's grief:
For such an office gracious heaven made her.
Pain cannot last for ever—future days !

Mar. Trust not the forms futurity describes;
As in the watery current, images,
That every passing breeze disjoins, inverts,
They cheat the gaze, till even fancy sickens,
So oft pursuing, and so oft deluded.

*Enter DESMOND.**Des.* Lord Dormer !*L. Dor.* Desmond !*Des.* Fortunate this chance !

Thus in the presence of my dearest friend,
 To be reliev'd from cheerless solitude,
 Or worse than solitude, in crowds unknown !
 Now fourteen days of gloom shall be redeem'd.
 I little thought to find you in Madrid ;
 Good truth, you travel leisurely.

L. Dor. (*Absently*) This is
 The Marquis de' Eboli.

Des. Who ! who ! said you ?

L. Dor. My lord, one of my earliest friends,
 Desmond,

Of whom you frequently have heard me speak.

Des. What now, Dormer ? look, look upon
 me, pray ;

Have you forgotten me ?

L. Dor. Forgotten you ?

Pray pardon me—my thoughts are not my own :
 'Tis I most need a friend—come—shall we walk ?

Des. Most willingly.

L. Dor. And you, my lord ?

Mar. I'm ready to attend you.

Exeunt.

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in the House of the Marquis de' Eboli.*

The MARCHIONESS DE' EBOLI and JULIA.

March. My dearest Julia ! have you thus resign'd

The fondest hope that flush'd your youthful cheek,
And on the mist of years pourtray'd, how brightly !
The rainbow forms of happiness and love ?

Julia. Do you but smile, and all my life to come

Shall bloom with brighter joys than e'er it knew.
'Tis your affliction tears my anxious breast.

March. For you, my daughter, I will still be cheerful.

Julia. And really happy ?

March. Oh ! forbear, sweet girl,
The sternest foe to peace must fly from you.

Julia. What loss then can I feel ? here will I live,

And vainly talk of endless gratitude,
Of obligations I can ne'er repay—my father !

Enter the MARQUIS DE' EBOLI.

March. Your charge was useless, I presume,
my lord.

Mar. As I expected—Dormer's manly sense
 The weak romance of little minds disowns,
 And feels the justice of a mother's claim.
 Yet slow his spirit lingers o'er the past,
 And then he wildly talks of an hereafter
 I fear will ne'er arrive.

Julia. I'll say, farewell !
 And you, my mother, who so well have known
 him,
 Will oft expatiate on his excellence,
 When he is far from us. *Exit.*

March. Alas ! she weeps !
 I am grown fond of grief, and hoard it now
 With avarice—I can spare none to Julia.
 I know him well—and from a certainty,
 This scheme, my lord, cannot succeed, I
 grant
 A short suspension of my daughter's bliss,
 Which, were it lasting, would increase my
 woes,
 And agonize my tortur'd brain to madness.
 Enough of this—you pass'd the public square,
 Were the inhabitants assembled there ?

Mar. Spectators crowded every avenue.

March. Poor wretched people ! to supply
 such scenes !
 And still more wretched to rejoice in them !
Mar. My dearest love ! above the croud en-
 thron'd,
 With reason to enforce fair mercy's rule,

The superstitious horrors you detest,*
 That desolate our land—the tortur'd wretch,
 Who sinks in death beneath the raging flame,
 Shall breathe out thanks to you, who solac'd him,
 When all forsook him, in imprisonment,
 And his last sigh shall speed a prayer for you.

March. Ye guiltless victims of unholy rage!
 E'en now the fatal fire innoxious plays,
 And the loud bigot laugh is heard no more;
 But the poor widow and her helpless orphan,
 Still live to mourn their only guardian lost.

Mar. Yet a protector they have found.

March. In whom?

Mar. A youth I left but now, Lord Dormer's
 friend.

I never saw—

March. From England?

Mar. Yes, from England.

He bears the mark of sorrow, deep impress'd

* The following account of an *auto da fé*, is taken from *A Journey through Spain*, by the Marquis de Langle.

" It is in the Dominican church that the trial and sentence are read.
 " At the conclusion of a sermon, the criminal is dragged to the principal
 " square, or market place, to hear mass, receive the sacrament, and be
 " burnt. For this purpose a scaffold and an altar are erected, and a fune-
 " ral pile is prepared. The words, *ite, missa, est*, serve as a signal for
 " throwing the devoted wretch into the flames. The funeral pile, the altar,
 " the populace, and the victim, are sprinkled with holy water, and the
 " *miserere* is sung. The executioner scatters the ashes, the holy office re-
 " turn home singing; and twenty thousand human beings have been spec-
 " tators of this abominable ceremony."

On his sunk eye, yet, as he pass'd the crowd,
 His ardent temper, darting uncontroll'd,
 In quick transition, now th' oppressor hating,
 And now in pity melting for the suff'rers,
 Bespoke a heart of varied excellence.

March. How long has he been in Madrid ?

Mar. Some fourteen days.

March. In stature ?

Mar. The usual height perhaps, or more.

March. His complexion dark ?

Mar. Why—why this agitation ?

March. Dark, said you ?

Mar. If I remember right.

March. And his name ?

Mar. Desmond.

March. Ye powers of mercy !—I have heard
 before

Of him—we will assist his noble wish,
 To comfort these poor mourners.

Mar. What is this ?

March. My lord !

Mar. Alas ! Amelia—I must weep to think
 Of this your glorious life, how 'tis adorn'd
 With actions of angelic excellence,
 'Till parents teach their babes to lisp your name,
 And offer all their prayers for a resemblance.

March. Am I indeed so honor'd by the world ?

Mar. Envy itself is dead ; yet thus array'd
 In all that fame and nature can bestow,
 Your languid head you droop in silent sorrow,
 And when of mirthful wit th' electric laugh

Speeds thro' the radiant circle, you partake not;
 Alone you stand, all cold, abstracted, lost,
 And the forc'd smile plays vainly on your lips.

March. Spare me! I pray!

Mar. The secret cause reveal
 Of this your deep affliction, and each hope,
 Each wish, each serious thought, shall dwell
 On means,

March. My lord, be faithful to your word.
 When to your importunities I yielded,
 And gave you, all I had to give, my hand,
 Did I deceive you with a shew of joy?
 I spoke of secret woes: you granted me
 The privilege of solitary grief;
 'Tis not to harrass you with mystery
 I claim your promise still. Then, oh! forgive
 My too rude melancholy, that forgets
 The forms of company.

Mar. Believe me, madam,
 'Twas not the eye of curiosity,
 That search'd the wounds of such a soul as yours.
 Communicated woe is half relieved.

March. Look thro' the world: you find your
 maxim true.
 My griefs must be my own—and now, my lord,
 Permit me in return to question you:
 Have I disgrac'd Alvarez' sacred name?
 Has the bright stream, that flows from kings and
 princes,
 Been interrupted here, or found a stain?
 Have I admitted to your house the worthless,

Though resting boldly on the world's applause ?
 In the calm progress of domestic life
 Have you in thought accus'd me of remissness ?
 Have I not studied to promote your plans ?
 And e'en your secret hopes anticipate ?
 Rais'd on esteem our early union grew,
 And mutual confidence entwin'd a wreath
 Of flowers, less gay than love's, but still unfading.

Mar. Trust me, my love, that wreath shall
 bloom for ever.

Full oft I think of all the countless blessings
 Your hand hath shower'd in rich profusion here,
 How from illib'ral prejudice you rais'd
 My wav'ring mind, and by your bright example,
 Taught me as man to feel for fellow-man !

March. Then, surely, good my lord, to shed a
 tear

O'er scenes my busy mem'ry still recalls,
 Sometimes to weep, and beg to weep uncheck'd,
 This is a favour you will kindly grant ;
 I would not boast, and I intreat your pardon.

Mar. You shall instruct me how to bury
 deep

My keen anxiety.

March. Did you imagine
 How hard it is to suffer still in secret,
 No sympathizing voice to speak of peace,
 Mere worldly compliments you would not need
 To prove my thanks—no, no, it must not be.

Mar. Oh ! were this breast insensible and cold,
 Or fir'd by jealousy's destructive rage,

That raised imploring eye had taught it mercy,
And charm'd suspicion's self to soft repose.

Exit.

March. Then all my fears are just : 'tis fourteen days

Since from my window I beheld him first,
As to and fro, with interrupted step,
He pac'd before my gate—I knew him well ;
The eye of fire, that with majestic glance
Thro' mighty nature pierced, the graceful form,
Where strength was softened into elegance !
(Weak seeming excellence ! how little worth !)
Were all his father—I forgot my wrongs,
In this their much lov'd consequence.
Vain, idle thought ! disgrace pursues that step !
Alvarez' name would close in infamy ;
Away ! ye phantoms of expiring fame !
I gaz'd, 'tis true, till vision seem'd to fail,
And as I left the place, whence my fond eyes
Were rivetted, my slow and lingering steps,
Bespoke, how well I could have lov'd him—
lov'd him !

And taught him to pursue the path of honor,
And warn'd him where the gulph of passion gap'd,
And pray'd him to forgive the cold neglect,
That visited his infancy—no—no—
A daughter ! husband ! twenty years of fame !
Forbid ! and a fond mother's love were crime ?

Exit.

Enter LORD DORMER.

L. Dor. I should have borne my brilliant
hopes delay'd
More firmly far—for when I think of all
This noble, matchless woman suffers, my woes
Are like a passing cloud.

Enter JULIA.

My dearest Julia !

Jul. Alas ! alas ! e'en as I entered now
I met my mother—had you too seen her,
Then you would weep like me.

L. Dor. 'Tis most dreadful.

Jul. A livid paleness veiled her face—her
breast
Heav'd with convulsive throbs—while streams
of tears

Which she would wipe away reproachfully,
Flow'd down her cheek.

L. Dor. What is this horrid conflict ?

Jul. Can I forsake her ?

L. Dor. No—my lovely Julia,
Where shall she refuge find, if not with you ?
But oh ! believe me, the Almighty Being,
By whom unnotic'd, not a sparrow falls,
Who listens to the hungry raven's cry,

Shall in his mercy interpose his arm,
 To save the noblest of his mortal works
 From premature decay—then, then, my love—

Jul. My father ever talks of new impressions,
 And chides the thought of your remembering still
 Your friends in Spain.

L. Dor. He speaks with prudent care,
 And, as an anxious father, cautions gives,
 That in reality he disregards.
 How proudly shall I introduce to all
 My beauteous foreigner ; yes, yes, my love !
 This dim obscurity shall pass away,
 And the same sun that once our days illum'd,
 Shall brighten those to come.

Julia. But th' interval !
 Should it be long, and you be called away ?

L. Dor. Each thought, not raised devotedly
 to you,
 Will strike a second pang of separation.

Julia. Yet, yet, should you forget me, Julia's
 sighs
 Amid the boisterous waves will sink unheard.

L. Dor. I know there is a pow'r in sympathy,
 Nor time nor space can weaken or impede,
 That bears the sigh across the stormy deep,
 Or lengthens out the sorrowing last farewell,
 Though caves, and rocks, and deserts intervene,
 Or to our nightly visions still suggests
 The forms we lov'd, e'en as we lov'd them most.

Julia. I shall forget my beads, I fear, to kneel

A truer vot'ry there—now let me haste
To seek my mother—countless are her woes.

L. Dor. All the good angels, as they must,
protect you.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A public Walk.*

LORD DORMER and DESMOND.

LORD DORMER.

MY accidental coldness thus explain'd,
You will forgive what came not from the heart.
Des. Or rather say, what did come from the
heart.

Thrice happy Dormer ! I congratulate you ;
But I—I, loveless, joyless, desolate !

L. Dor. What ! melancholy ? you, whose
nimble blood

Cours'd through your veins with such rapidity,
Chasing the misty humours that oppress
More tardy spirits ; but say, what brought you
here ?

A warm description of some beauteous nun,
Some sainted Ursula ? your travellers
Delight in painting these secluded fair,
As far beyond the charms exposed so rudely,
To the cold bleaching of our northern sky.

Des. I cannot jest, and in your friendship;
Dormer,

I seek a refuge from the cruel storm
That beats my anxious spirit with its rage.

L. Dor. Is it so true a sorrow? you, whose fire
Shone ever bright, with zeal unchang'd,
Eager to undertake whate'er employ,
Or opportunity or chance presented.

Des. I am inactive, fly the social board,
Unable to amuse, or be amus'd,
And the quick flame, that blaz'd so vivid here,
Glimmers but faintly, half extinguish'd, chill'd.

L. Dor. Oh! what a world is this! the great,
the good,
Born but to mark the common lot of man!
Through many happy hours I shar'd your joys,
But feel it now a higher privilege
To bear the burden of your sorrows with you.

Des. The venerable man, you well remember
I once suppos'd my father.

L. Dor. You suppos'd?

Des. A month ago he paid the long ow'd
debt
Of nature.

L. Dor. Old, infirm, with slow decay,
Silent, he sunk in death.

Des. For nineteen years
I call'd him father, and discover now
The lov'd deceit he practis'd on my feelings.
His kindness only justified that name.

L. Dor. Indeed!

Des. Related by the gen'ral bond
Of man with man, no more.

L. Dor. 'Tis strange ;
 Yet now the past crowds busy on my mind.
 His treatment of you, his extreme indulgence,
 Mix'd with no anxious trembling for your faults ;
 The lib'ral wealth outrunning all your wants,
 With no instructions on its use or waste ;
 When of your mother you would fondly talk,
 His deep confusion, and unwillingness
 To answer to your interrogatories ;
 All, all, to an unclouded eye declar'd
 A myst'ry in your birth and parentage.

Des. The sad intelligence pursued me far
 Of my friend's death—so I must call him now :
 Dormer, I lov'd him, as alone on earth
 Connected with me by the ties of blood,
 And a long chain of sweet remembrances
 Were snapt asunder—hast'ning to behold
 The last respect paid to his honor'd shade,
 With tears of gratitude and filial love
 I dew'd his grave—Imagine my surprise,
 When midst his num'rous papers I perceiv'd
 That all the ample means of consequence,
 I had enjoy'd in my superfluous wealth,
 With great provision for futurity,
 Had flow'd from Spain.

L. Dor. What do I hear ?

Des. My search became more anxious, when
 I found
 A scroll peculiarly address'd to me ;
 This, Dormer, this disclos'd the awful secret,
 That on the balance of this hour suspends

For me unutterable joy or woe ;
 Tis there I am confess'd the natural son
 Of Amelia d' Alvarez—

L. Dor. Almighty powers !

Des. The sole descendant from a noble line :
 And that my mother—

L. Dor. This then is the myst'ry,
 The fearful myst'ry, wildly agonizing—
 And know you of your father ?

Des. Nothing—nothing ;
 My aged friend, tis easy to perceive,
 Was but an instrument in other hands,
 No clue reveal'd—no circumstance betray'd,
 His great employers could conceal from him.
 But what said you ? is not my mother happy ?

L. Dor. Happy ? the meanest beggar of the
 street,
 Whose haggard eye proclaims the tale of famine,
 Whose tortures tell him what his children feel,
 Is happier than your mother.

Des. Alas for pity !

L. Dor. And you the source of all her fears,
 her woes !

Desmond, my friend, I pray you listen to me :
 Let me implore you for my Julia's sake ;
 O'er every step you take maturely pause.

Des. You surely err—I never was ambitious ;
 Before the public to move confess'd,
 And honor'd as her son, my wishes soar not.

L. Dor. Then spoke my best, my earliest,
 dearest friend ;

Forgive forgive the momentary wrong
Of my unjust suspicion.

Des. Hid from the world,
In privacy, all silent, should she smile
With the fond ardour of a mother's love,
The secret hour shall sanctify my joy.

L. Dor. Then may her future days unclouded pass,
Secure of fame, supported by her son.

Des. The writer thus concludes his history :
My mother wishing to conceal my birth,
In cradled infancy entrusted me
To him whose honor'd name I still must bear,
Enjoining him to bury in oblivion
My high descent—that being an Englishman,
He chose his country for our residence,
Where he would humbly hope he treated me
In education, or my general life,
As well became the race of great Alvarez.

L. Dor. You have not seen the Marchioness ?

Des. Not yet !

From day to day I pace before her gate,
Hoping, and still not daring to explore,
If hope is but illusive—rack'd with suspense,
Till madd'ning torture forces the attempt,
And then my smother'd voice refusing still
To announce the stranger's presence—yet why
doubt?

She cannot, cannot, spurn me from her love ;
The voice of nature pleads, and must be heard.
Yes, I will go to her, alone, without you ;

I would not raise a blush upon her cheek,
Though none but warm admiring friends beheld
her.

Voices are heard chanting.

Enter a number of Children, who pass over the stage two by two, chanting.

L. Dor. (*To a Priest who follows*) Some festival, good sir?

Priest. The birth-day of the bounteous dame,
Our noble foundress, and these grateful orphans
Kneel in yon church before the sacred altar,
Invoking for her long and happy days.

L. Dor. What is the name that on these
children's sighs

Ascends to him who guards the fatherless?

Priest. It is a name ennobl'd not by blood
Alone, but more, far more, by virtuous deeds,
That throw the purple current back to gain
E'en at it's source a fresher, brighter hue.
You recognize the name of D' Eboli;
But I must leave you.

Des. May I ne'er act, as to disgrace her son.
This, I imagine, is her lovely form,
Where art has linger'd with its finest touches;
I found it with the hist'ry of my birth.

(Giving a miniature.)

L. Dor. Had I not seen the bright original,
Still had I boldly prais'd the strong resemblance;
Tis not for art, nor in the scope of genius,
To feign a face like this—it is herself!
Her soften'd sentiment, her noble pride!

Far dearer now, the mother of my friend.

Des. Heaven grant it!

Exeunt.

The Children returning chant the following verses.

Spirit ! of universal love !

Protect the orphan's friend ;

Thy balmy pinions round her move,

The whisper'd wish attend.

May all her thoughts successive fly,

Soft as the dreams of heav'n ;

As downy slumbers close her eye,

Oh may those dreams be given.

In " silent, unperceiv'd decay,"

May age steal slowly on ;

Till, as the mortal falls away,

The soul assumes its throne.

Exeunt.

SCENE II.—MARCHIONESS *reading.*

(*Throwing aside her book.*)

March. Away, ye gilded trifles ! pompous nothings;

The pedant's dogma, or the poet's dream,

The heart disowns you ; tis to you I turn,

Children of wretchedness ; can you accuse me ?

Have I pursued your piercing cries with scorn ?
 Oh ! not the poorest, most oppress'd amongst
 you,
 Pillow'd on straw, his pittance ill supply'd,
 But I may envy—he has his children round him.
 But what if I confess his high descent,
 And to the world proclaim him as my son ?
 How the chaste prude, who no distinction knows,
 But all, who fall, blends in one common shame,
 How will she triumph ! how the men will sneer
 At the once proud Amelia !—my daughter
 Will feel the involuntary blush, and shrink,
 As the rude jest assails my hapless fate !
 E'en the poor object of my charity,
 Will deem the tale but fortune's privilege,
 And thank his God his wife is my superior :
 All, all will scorn and trample on my name,
 The world will scoff at great Alvarez' daughter.
 Shade of my father ! save me ! break, ye strings
 That twine around my heart : it shall be so :
 My honor'd name shall live unstain'd for ever !

Enter PAGE.

Page. Madam, a Foreigner requests admittance.

March. And did he name his country ? England? boy?

Page. So I should guess from his impatient rudeness.

March. Whence is that smile ?

Page. Madam, I did not smile.

March. Go—bid him enter: (*Exit Page.*)
 now bear up my soul,
 And still one moment animate my frame.

Enter DESMOND.

Des. Each lineament exact, yet grief has worn
 Its furrows there—I interrupt you, madam.

March. His form! his look!—his voice!—
 support me, heaven!

Your pardon, sir.

Des. How, how shall I address her?
 She awes me into silent reverence.

March. You are a stranger in Madrid, I fancy.

Des. I am unhappily a stranger here.

March. What! melancholy, sir? can sorrow
 live

Where mirth and pleasure riot madly round;
 Where rapture's tones awake the lively dance,
 And radiant beauty threads the dazzling maze,
 Where from all nations num'rous travellers
 Meet to amuse, enliven, and inform;
 Where for sequestered men the lab'ring student
 Wastes the long night in proud philosophy.
 Can grief pursue this ever-varying line?

Des. Can gauds like these relieve the rooted
 care

That preys upon the heart?

March. You have answer'd.

Des. I love the world: around the festive
 board

I seize the laugh, the gayest of the gay,
 But tis a pleasure quickly vanishing;
 By crowds surrounded, man exalts his step,
 Eager to gain the tribute of applause,
 The glitt'ring pageant, gaz'd at, and forgot,
 Affection stamps his image on the heart,
 And with the heart alone the impression dies.

March. Fly, fly their fate, who build their
 happiness

On visionary thoughts, and baseless hopes ;
 The fond embrace thrills thro' the cradl'd babe,
 And soft endearments wake the smile of love ;
 Man proudly scorns the weakness of the child ;
 Old age approaches with his sweeping scythe,
 And cuts the last remains of feeling down ;
 The close of life is cold and desolate,
 Nor love nor friendship glimmer round the grave.

Des. Colour your picture with a warmer hue ;
 The blest affections have not fled the earth,
 Though seldom found, and at long intervals.

March. World ! world ! what do I sacrifice
 to thee ! (*aside*)

Des. There are, there are, who deem affec-
 tion's ties,

And all the soften'd charities of home,
 Choicest of heaven's gifts, that make earth heav'n.
 No dread alarms, no lengthen'd toil severe,
 Tho' life itself hung trembling on the hazard,
 Could for a moment check their fond attempt,
 To catch the sigh of sympathy and love.

March. I would believe all this—but why to me?

Des. Explore your heart, and find an answer there.

March. You are mysterious! were you more explicit,

Your purpose (now impenetrably veil'd)
Would be effected far more speedily.

Des. Am I then quite unknown?

March. My memory

Presents no traces of your form or manner.

Des. Then hear me, kneeling thus, thus low,
submissive,

To tell you all my boast, and all my hope.

March. Rise, sir, I am not us'd to suits so fervent.

Des. Far have I travell'd, between hope and fear,

My nights unknown to sleep, my days to peace.

March. Insulted by a stranger!

Des. Stranger? mother!

March. What do I hear? sir, surely, if you jest,
A better subject you might find than feelings
But now the topic of your eulogy;
If with my ranc'rous enemies you join
For the destruction of my peace and fame,
Learn, sir, the daughter of Alvarez knows
To feel the wrong, and to chastise th' offender.

Des. And can a son sink at a mother's feet
With prayers so vain, so weak, so ill conceiv'd?

March. Be this detested suit for ever dropt,
This prayer that slanders and imploring kills.

Des. Oh ! I conjure you, stay, a moment,
 hear !

Am I the only wretch you spurn in misery ?

March. What, sir, have you to say to me ?

Des. Remember you this picture ? madam ?

March. It once

Resembled me, but time, and ceaseless sorrow,
Are cruel spoilers on a woman's cheek :

How, sir, became it yours ?

Des. By a friend's death ;
It was bequeath'd me in this scroll enclos'd :
It was my only joy ; I pause, and hang
From hour to hour o'er all its loveliness,
Till oft its features seem to glow with smiles,
And beam with soft regard.

March. Language like this

What must I call ? insanity or vice ?

Des. Read, read that scroll.

March. Why, sir, should I read it ?

Des. It will discover what this language
means ;

'Twill prove I am not criminal nor mad,
Unless 'tis guilt, or wild insanity
To ask a blessing from a long lost mother ;
Or should my manner incoherent seem,
Tis that I play a part in scenes untried,
And for the first time hear a parent's voice.

March. I will read it—now, now, assist me,
 heaven !

(Reads the scroll, and afterwards tears it.)

You have devis'd this plan most artfully,
 In time arrang'd, in all its parts complete ;
 But, sir, your malice breathes its poison vainly.
 Insensate ! to suppose, each rude unknown,
 Could fix a blemish on my splendid fame,
 That from the earliest dawn of sense or thought,
 I hold all glorious as my father bore it,
 Speckless and white as Pyrenean snow.
 I hear you are from England—I was taught
 To love your nation, as of men of honor,
 Not base conspirers 'gainst a woman's peace.

Des. Will you expel me from your sacred presence ;

Deserted, hopeless, exil'd, all unknown
 To me the name of parents or of home ?
 Am I not then your son ? is there a name
 More dear, or of more suasive eloquence ?

March. Most excellently well ! your dark employers

May amply praise the finish'd actor's part.

Des. Spare me these piercing wounds, prove
 me, try me,

My warm affection put to sternest trial :
 Toil, danger, suff'ring, were delights to me,
 Could they but purchase, in a mother's breast,
 One thought of bliss, or calm one throb of
 woe.

March. One only favour I would beg of you.

Des. Name, name it quick ; my zeal out-
 runs your words.

March. To leave me, and to think of me no
 more.

Des. To think of you no more? then must I
perish

And tear your image from my breast with life.

March. So end such bold and lofty promises.

Des. Oh! say, what must the shipwreck'd
sea-boy feel,

Who long with nervous arm hath boldly stemm'd
The boiling surge, till, as he reach'd the shore,
His failing vigour mocks his last attempt;
You lend your hand, then, as he grasps, forsake
him,

What must he feel, when the next refluent wave
Shall hurl him back to death?

March. I trusted not

Your words, nor am surprised to find them air.
Why, sir, prolong a conversation still
Where every word is mark'd with pain and sor-
row.

Enter JULIA.

Julia, my child, your presence ever welcome
Now gives me life.

Des. My sister too!

Fair excellence! kneel, kneel with me! entreat,
By all the sacred ties that children twine
Around the parent's heart!

Julia. What mean you, sir?

March. Leave me—begone—nor madly dare
destroy

A daughter's reverence for her doating mother.

Julia. Alas! my mother, is it not enough
 Some secret grief should prey upon your life?
 Must cold, unfeeling insults tear the wound,
 How much too deep already!

March. Tis even so.

Julia. Why, why is this, sir?

March. Speak not, I charge you—but begone
 —my brain

Is all on fire.

Des. You drive me to despair.

Reflect—

March. I have reflected, and resolv'd;
 And by the omnipotence of heaven, I swear,
 You are a stranger to me, and for ever.

Des. Oh God! Oh God!

Exit.

(*The Marchioness sinks on a chair: the scene closes.*)

SCENE III.—*A Street—the House of the Marquis.*

Enter LORD DORMER.

L. Dor. I cannot doubt my friend's success—
 tis strange,
 This long eventful chain!

Enter DESMOND from the House.

Has she received you?

Des. Received me? yes—as a dog.

L. Dor. Is't possible ?

Des. She drove me from her like a loathsome
beggar

Whose cries became importunate.

L. Dor. Alas !

Des. Why—what a niggard nature is to man !
The beasts that range the forest wild and rude,
And fright the ear of night with furious howl,
E'en they shall hang with rapture o'er their off-
spring,

Lament their loss : but man ! this lordly man !

L. Dor. Come, come, despair not thus.

Des. All gracious heaven !
Withhold this specious gift of reason from him,
That makes him so presumptuous and vain ;
Give him but instinct, ign'rant to commit,
Or justify a wrong—tis horrible !

L. Dor. Desmond, how fortune has connect-
ed us !

In early life we went to school together,
Still as we grew, the same pursuits allur'd,
One place, one study, form'd us for each other,
Our serious thoughts dwelt on our country's
peace,

And similar amusements e'er beguil'd
Our lighter hours away ; and now we meet
In the same foreign country, where our hopes
Rest on one house—we shall succeed together.

Des. Could you conceive the stern severity
That mark'd her words—
And then her daughter ! Oh how lovely ! .

L. Dor. Most exquisitely lovely !

Des. To be spurn'd

By both, as last, and lowest of mankind !

L. Dor. When next you meet, her kindness
shall redeem

All tortures past, and the maternal blessing

Reward a son so worthy of the name.

Des. Never, never—unconquerable hate
Fills up the place of soft maternal love.
What a wild dreary vacancy is here !
No mother, sister, relative—I stand
As the scath'd oak upon the blasted heath,
With wintry desolation all around. *Exeunt.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The outside of a Convent and a Church adjoining.*

Enter LORD DORMER and DESMOND.

Lord Dormer.

MY hopes are ardent for you ; 'twas mistake,
 'Twas misconception of your meaning.
 Zealous, enflam'd, impassion'd, you forgot
 The nice distinctions of a woman's honor ;
 A letter is a calm expositor
 Warm from the heart, as conversation free,
 No fev'rish wand'rings that disorder both.

Des. I am not sanguine, I pursued your plan,
 I wrote as you desir'd, expressly stating
 The full extent of my most fervent wish.

L. Dor. Have courage then ; her messenger
 e'en now
 Requir'd my company ; I shall bring tidings
 To chase these clouds of sorrow from your brow.

Des. Farewell ! this sacred edifice attracts my
 eye ;
 The holy gloom that reigns in silence here,

Suits the sad temper of a tortur'd mind,
More than these friendly prophecies of good.

Exeunt: Desmond into the Church.

SCENE II.—*The inside of a Church.*

DON FERDINAND *rising from prayers before the image of a Saint.*

Ferd. Tis past ! creative brain ! that throb'st so hot

With fancies wild, and forms incongruous,
Oh ! have not twenty lengthen'd years of woe
Chill'd thee to peace ? Where would'st thou
hurry me ?

What ! shall the madman glory in his chains ?

Can smiles become the features of despair ?

A visionary hand directs to heav'n ;
And there with flaming sword the avenger stands
To bar my entrance—monstrous are my crimes,
And God will punish—in his holy temple
Nightly, I seek repose, where all around
The letter'd monument, records the hope
Of him that died in righteousness. Away !

Tis wild delusion—no atoning prayer
Shall at the mercy-seat prevail for me.

Enter DESMOND.

Des. 'Twas mis'ry's voice, and I can doubly
claim

Th' attention of the wretched ! fellow man,
And fellow sufferer—stranger !

Ferd. Who art thou ?
That dar'st approach the silent sanctuary
Of heav'n rejected men—haste to the world,
Mix with the gay, the happy, and the young :
I am alone, forgotten, miserable.

Des. I would console you in your misery.
Ferd. Console, young man ? When the Al-
mighty pow'r

In wrath dispenses judgments on the world,
When warring winds tear in wild hurricane,
Earth's fairest produce, sustenance of life,
When the red lightning o'er the pealing sky
Flashing, anticipates the final doom,
These are my consolations.

Des. Why is this ?
I am a wretch like you, but still I hope.
Ferd. Hope ! hope, " that comes to all, comes
not to me."

Forgive my tears, I am not us'd to kindness ;
Here in God's sacred house, with holy men
I dwell, if haply time, and penitence, and
pray'r,

My great offences may redeem—tis vain !

Des. Look up to heav'n, and humbly there
repose ;

He the poor mourner comforts.

Ferd. But my thoughts
Are clogg'd with guilt, and sink remediless.
Or should my spirit, rapt in transient joy,

Ascend to visions of eternal mercy,
 My holy brethren, cold, impartial judges,
 Roar in my ears my complicated crimes,
 And drag me back to torture and to hell.

Des. What deed is this, that so foretels its
 horror?

Ferd. The fatal day, in death's last agony,
 Her fault'ring tongue implor'd me, and forgave.

Des. I ! I conjure you, answer !

Ferd. You are young :
 You should not hate mankind, and from your
 look

A charm steals over me, you should not hate me.

Des. This dark suspense is torture ; speak,
 oh ! speak.

Ferd. Then as the father of the injur'd saint
 With curses you will fly my hated sight :
 But now you pitied me.

Des. And must, for ever !

Ferd. These, these are friendship's words, and
 strike again

On my worn mind, impressions scarcely known ;
 I could be garrulous, and pour before you
 My crimes, my fears ; and should you shudder
 at me,

You will not shun the lonely penitent.

Des. I am myself unhappy, most unhappy,
 But your misfortunes teach me how to suffer.

Ferd. Misfortunes, say you ? far too light
 that name.

Des. Let me swear to you.—

Ferd. Nay, swear not, young man,
 These holy walls should echo better sounds ;
 I will believe you, I will tell you all :
 You have a look that forces confidence.
 Yes ! you shall know my strangely guilty life ;
 Yet should that eye still beam forgiveness on me,
 My future days will lose their shade ; oh, no !
 What tale so full of horror ever blanch'd
 The cheek with fear ? Know then, my rising
 youth,
 Enslav'd to all the passions of our nature,
 Was stain'd with murder !

Des. Alas ! that word !

Ferd. You are not yet prepar'd ; I will be
 regular

In my narration.

Des. Tranquillize yourself.

Ferd. Why should I poison your unpractis'd
 ear ?

'Tis silence best becomes my guilt and mis'ry.

Des. I will dwell with you, in my woes united,
 And at our leisure we'll exchange our hist'ries.

Ferd. Then hear me now—'twere horror to
 deceive you.

Travelling in early life the provinces
 Wash'd by the sea, I was attack'd by robbers ;
 Their savage treatment left me on the ground,
 Faint with my wounds, almost bereft of life ;
 Returning sense the anxious care confess'd,
 Of the poor tenant of a neighbouring hut,
 Who kindly bore me, where his little all

Was prodigally spent on my recov'ry.
 His only child—(a moment pardon me)
 An unaffected, artless, lovely girl,
 Sweet as the blushing rose, that wildly grew
 Around her dwelling, she attended me ;
 I gain'd her confidence, and she would tell
 The rustic loves of all the village swains,
 How in the dance one sought to win his fair,
 Another by his jests and merriment ;
 Then, in return, I oft would largely speak
 Of the intrigues and plots of polish'd life,
 Till she would raise her hands, and scarce believe
 Such things could be—I lov'd this charming girl :
 I had been taught to rush down passion's stream,
 With every sail unfurl'd—virtuous she was,
 And I became her husband—Spare me farther,
 This vest, this place, declare the damning tale.

Des. Break not off thus, but thro' the
 length'ning chain
 Of smallest circumstance proceed, for never
 Did interest so strong possess my soul.

Ferd. Returning to Madrid, I brought my
 wife.

Now mark the deep descent of crime and guilt :
 Amongst my noble friends I felt asham'd
 To introduce my humble cottage girl,
 Tho' form'd by nature, eminent in all
 A doating husband could have wish'd his bride.
 Let me be brief—e'en now my bosom swells
 As ocean's waves, when the rude storm is past ;
 Just then there mov'd in fashion's highest round

A lady, matchless both in form and mind,
 In whom the various qualities we meet
 In other women, one to one assign'd,
 Collected seem'd to make a perfect whole.
I—I—defying every principle
 Of honor, duty, gratitude, lov'd her,
 To madness lov'd her—heav'n ! thy ways are just !
I vow'd eternal faith—I prais'd as real
 The visions of the bless'd, where soul to soul,
 And heart to heart are knit in endless joy.
 She trusted, she believ'd the flatt'ring tale;
 But prudence still went hand in hand with love.
 She was the victim of such arts, as left
 No stain upon her spotless mind—you tremble !
 And as our great progenitor, turn pale,
 Foreseeing worse than brother's murder.
I was impassion'd, madden'd, and with frenzy,
 Rushing into the chamber of my wife,
 My wife ! my benefactress ! lay before me
 Weltering in her blood !—Interrupt me not—
 Her friends were poor—'twas easy to prevent
 Inquiry on the manner of her death.
 Again I mingled with the world, how vainly !
 Thro' all its maze my murder'd wife pursu'd me,
 Sat at the social board, poison'd the cup ;
 My days and nights no kind distinction knew,
 The spectre follow'd thro' the sun's broad glare ;
 Deep drench'd in blood, I dar'd not to approach
 Her—the lov'd cause of all ; receive this tear,
 Oh ! ever honor'd ! and thou, Almighty God !
 Let it not swell the number of my crimes.

Disdaining to complain, her charms she hid
 In solitude; and I, by furies goaded,
 Fled to this monast'ry; my wealth immense
 Was dedicate to pious purposes.

The world believed me dead, and obsequies
 Fictitious, the report confirm'd. I pass
 My days and nights in presence of the God
 Of mercy, and, alas! of justice too,
 And you alone of men have e'er consol'd me.

Des. Dreadful indeed has been your guilt!
 and great

Your punishment! but if you cast a thought
 On the proud hopes that take from death its sting,
 And rob the grave of all it's victory,
 Attend to me.

Ferd. Attend to you? your voice
 Awakens pleasure indescribable.

Des. Born in a land, by superstitious clouds
 Obscur'd, darkling you ill explore the way
 To life immortal; can it be for man,
 Tho' rob'd in sacred vest, and in his hand
 The censor holding, fragrant sacrifice,
 To speak the judgments of the King of Kings?
 If thou would'st recognize the word of God,
 Sink in thyself, oh man! and search it there:
 The sacred monitor within presides,
 With heaven's undoubted sword; tis conscience,
 conscience;
 When this approves, despise the voice of men.
 It is the dawning of eternal day,
 An emanation from the sapphire throne,

Beyond the tomb to show'r its radiant flood,
Thro' space unlimited, and endless time.

Ferd. Fearless you speak, but youth is ever rash.

Des. 'Tis not the arrogance of youth that guides me;

In happier climes, the aged, and the wise,
Have form'd their lives by sentiments like these.
What ! shall the being of the moment measure
Eternal justice ? shall imperfect man
Hold in his hand the balance of the skies ?
Bid him go hurl the thunder, and the earth
Shake with his mighty nod—no ! 'tis delusion !
These high pretenders, like yourself, are subject
To all the frailties of humanity ;
Fly from their vengeance to the God of mercy.

Ferd. To doubt is sure perdition—peace ! oh peace !

Des. Then doubt no longer, but pursue, unaw'd,

The call celestial ! so shall your years
Glide peaceful on in soft tranquillity,
The hand of hope shall smooth your furrow'd
brow,

And terror yield to reverential awe.

Ferd. Leave me ! your rashness spreads new horror round.

Des. Reflect then on my words.

Ferd. Could I avoid it !

To doubt is impious, and impiety
Swells not the catalogue of my transgressions :

Youth, you have much to answer for.

Des. Be then

The punishment my own—farewell ! remember
The attributes of heav'n know no bounds

Exit.

(*On a sudden the organ is heard, accompanied with voices.*)

Ferd. Kneel, kneel, thou wretch ! in humble
penitence,

Lo ! whisper'd soft as music's melting strain,
Around me floats the voice divine of mercy.

Exit.

SCENE III.—*An Apartment in the House of the Marquis—The Marchioness alone.*

March. Ah no ! such happiness cannot be
mine ;

E'en from my cradle I was mark'd for woe.

His letter !—oh ! 'tis scarcely legible,

So blotted with my tears—much it insists

On secrecy—his meaning of that word

He prov'd to day in presence of my daughter.

On secrecy ? from some much honor'd friend

'Twere treachery to conceal our inmost thoughts,

And he too has his friend, that friend another,

'Till the whole world, of secret trusts may babble,

As of the common news of every day ;
 Yet I will try him—Dormer's open temper
 Will on the hint disclose how far—

Enter the MARQUIS and JULIA, as from walking.

Mar. Amelia !

March. My lord, and Julia ! your return surprises.

Mar. (Aside) Her agitation each succeeding hour

Alarms me more.

March. Have you walk'd far my lord ?

Mar. First answer me—you have receiv'd an insult

From the rash youth I prais'd so idly to you ?

I ask no confidence, but to protect you,

This is a privilege I ne'er will lose.

March. Still will you probe the wounds you cannot heal,

And with officious zeal exasperate

The pain beyond all human power to soothe !

By the affection you have ever borne me,

(How ill deserv'd, I feel ! how ill return'd !)

By all your sacred vows and promises,

Deeply to veil suspicion's prying eye ;

By the affliction of a suffering spirit,

Condemn'd to pine in solitary woe,

I must conjure you still to pardon me,

Tho' I lament and meet my wrongs alone.

Mar. (Aside) From him I will extort an explanation. *Exit.*

March. His sudden anger shews some dread suspicion.

Away, that thought ! You seem dejected, Julia,
Lord Dormer holds a more despotic sway
Than you would fain allow. (*Aside*) Alas ! alas !
Must both my children tremble at my name ?

Julia. No, no, my mother ! he is lost for ever ;
And when he talks again of golden hopes—

March. You knit your brow with sage experience,

And preach upon the world's uncertainty.

Julia. With you I'll live, and kiss the starting tear

Away—I shall be happy so employ'd.

March. My Julia ! did you know, how many tears

This short distress has cost your doating mother :
No more—but say, where was your morning walk ?

Julia. Amongst the objects of your gracious bounty,

And we return, loaded with grateful sighs,
And long-drawn prayers of thankfulness to you,
Who pity-like still follow fortune's steps,
Pouring in oil where'er she blindly wounds ;
But 'tis the manner that endears the gift,
When all the distance of your rank forgotten,
You bend to hear the tale of poverty,
And speak the words, that, as the dew of heav'n,

Revive the flower just with'ring on its stem.
 With what true fervor did the helpless orphan
 Cling to my knees, and lisp his reverence,
 As still his untaught gaze presented to him
 A likeness to his noble benefactress ;
 Then, then, my dearest mother, did I pray,
 Not to resemble you in form alone.

March. (Aside) Father of mercies ! hear but
 half that prayer !

Julia. We were reminded of a circumstance,
 Fixt on the poor man's heart indelibly ;
 The grateful have unfailing memories,
 Nor has the day, your honor'd birth recalling,
 Escap'd their fond congratulating joy.

March. My birth-day ! yes, I had forgotten it,
 'Twas on this day I drew the vital air,
 When, as I slept upon my mother's breast,
 She gaz'd with rapture on her first-born child,
 Then rais'd her eyes in gratitude to heaven.
 Oh ! blindness to the future ! forty suns
 Have run their course, and oft have I beheld
 Their splendor thro' my tears—my honor'd pa-
 rents

Are in the grave—Alvarez' pride is past ;
 I stand alone, the representative,
 The weak and fading representative,
 Of all the world deem proud and glorious.
 My father ! hear ! if from the converse high,
 Of angels and archangels, where thou sit'st
 Enthron'd, thou condescendest to regard,
 Thy once lov'd child on earth, protect her still !

Jul. My dearest mother !

March. Julia, I consider

This day an eminence, presenting boldly,
In retrospective view, my various life.

Julia. And 'tis a vision of resplendent colours.
Yet should some spot less bright attract your eye,
Less dazzling brilliant than your soul demands,
Let not the precepts, I have heard so oft
With fond delight, fall from your lips in vain ;
See, see, you said, how ill the best, the wisest,
Can bear the test of self-examination ;
Fir'd with the zeal of action, they suppose
The heights of virtue plac'd within their reach ;
But when their wearied nature makes a pause,
And shews the prospect, as it is, before them,
They fly the rugged path, the steep ascent,
And own their progress tardy and imperfect.

March. Sweet are your consolations, dearest

Julia,

Oft as the rolling year recalls the day,
When first I clasp'd you to my beating heart,
Each thought, and action past, each present
feeling

Shall pour a flood of happiness around you ;
I shall forget my sorrows in the grave,
You, you shall be respected and ador'd.

Julia. The grave ? Oh ! speak not thus.

March. The transient night

Displac'd by day eternal.

Julia. But for me, my mother
Remediless despair.

March. Why, why should grief
 Be woo'd and courted as our sovereign good ?
 But see, Lord Dormer—leave us, dearest Julia !
Exit Julia.

Enter LORD DORMER.

L. Dor. Madam, should I describe, in strictest truth,
 The joy it gives me to obey your call,
 Alone of all the world you would not trust me.
March. I had believed you once, tho' scarcely now ;
 I must have seem'd to you some fatal pow'r,
 That pointed to the glitt'ring form of bliss,
 And when you grasp'd, derided your attempt.

L. Dor. Still magic hope threw all her spells around me.

March. Alas ! for me ! in earliest life she broke

Her wand, and with the shining fragments strew'd
 The cold and thankless earth. (*Aside*) I would secure

My daughter's happiness, by giving her
 To him alone deserving such a prize.

L. Dor. But shall we leave you, madam, desolate ?

March. No, no, fear not.

L. Dor. Now you inspire a thought
 That all the power of language must defy
 To paint the transport it awakens here.

March. (*Aside*) What means this sudden
joy. I wrong him not:

I must collect myself for farther trial.

L. Dor. Alas ! she trembles.

March. If a fond mother's pray'r
Avail you ought, you will be blest indeed.

L. Dor. Now in the presence of your lovely
daughter,

Let me pour out my soul in gratitude.

March. What ! still the same, my lord ? still
restless for ever ?

I must enjoin you momentary penance,
For thus submitting to so cold a plan.
Your friends had scarcely known your character.
The name of friend brings to my memory
Some information I receiv'd this morning,
Of a young man but just arriv'd from England :
You live with him in closest intimacy.

As you can now no longer think yourself
A visitor unwelcome, he perhaps
Will oft attend you—I admire your country—
I shall rejoice to see him.

L. Dor. To see him ?

I—I—I—introduced him to the marquis.

March. He follows your example, I conclude,
And wisely spends the hours of active life
In gleaning, from the treasures of the world,
Stores where old age may dwell with avarice,
The pleasing recollections of the past ;
Nay, let me not distress you—he may be

Commission'd on some secret embassy.

L. Dor. 'Tis usual, madam, for our English youth

To visit foreign countries.

March. I rejoice

He deems the Spaniard worthy his regard.

L. Dor. Deeply degraded would he sink beneath

The rank of wise or good, could he involve

In one all sweeping stigma of contempt

A numerous people.

March. He concludes his travels,
And visits us, perhaps, on his return.

The compliment were greater, to have made us
An earlier object of his curious view.

Is he much known in Spain ?

L. Dor. So noble is he,
So pleasing is his manners, and so great
In all the qualities of mind
And heart—

March. I doubted not his excellence,
Though should I find him as mysterious
As you, his friend, appear in his behalf,
I shall regard him with some slight suspicion.

L. Dor. Then never was suspicion plac'd
so ill ;
He was my early friend, and well I know
The inmost foldings of his valued nature ;
The best affections warm his glowing breast
And all the gentle charities of home
Soften his youth—a firm and manly sense

Directs and rules their bold luxuriance :
 For situations eminently form'd,
 Where worldly prudence claims a sacrifice,
 A flow'ry garland on the shrine of fame,
 No hapless victim bleeding at the heart.

March. (Aside) Is it then so ? This praise
 is singular ?

Embracing an event unknown to me ;
 Had you inform'd him of your residence
 In this our city ?

L. Dor. No—mutual wonder
 Encreas'd the pleasure of our meeting here.

March. Has he no other friend, in converse
 sweet,
 To wile away the careless hour of leisure ?

L. Dor. No other friend, alas ! no other re-
 fuge !

March. Boasts he a splendid name, and rich
 in honor ?

L. Dor. The name of accident—no pompous
 rites

Proclaim'd the sound of long transmitted glory.
 In early life, torn from the parent-tree,
 And driv'n away by all the winds of heaven,
 To die unshelter'd on the common road.

March. My lord, you err—he was not so
 bereft

Of fortune's blessings—Pardon me my warmth,
 A thought occurr'd—well, I release you now.

L. Dor. How shall I answer you ? May I
 not plead

For him, the best, the noblest of mankind.

March. Are you so warm a friend? so cold a
lover?

I would believe this high-ton'd eulogy.

Your friend is noble, gen'rous, great, and good,
And still unerring, treads the line of honor;
I doubt it not, keep him, and cherish him,
But were I Julia, I should deem these praises
Somewhat too loo long for an expected lover.

L. Dor. I will entreat her pardon, madam—
farewell *Exit.*

March. Tis as I fear'd—and shall I prostrate
low,

The hopes of twenty years beneath his feet?
This is his secrecy—his promise, this—
To force me to proclaim him as my son!
To bind me to the stake, and then to triumph.
Tis vain—let me be faithful to myself,
His bold assertions shall not long prevail,
Tho' back'd by scorn, and pointing contumely;
He spurns my prayer, he now shall feel my
power. *Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*An Apartment of DESMOND's.*

DESMOND *alone.*

Des. No answer yet! my messenger detain'd!
Was Dormer right? and will he tidings bring

To chase these clouds of sorrow from my brow ?
 Or shall I fly the world, and dwell for ever
 With yon poor outcast wretch ! this dread
 suspense

Were well displac'd by certainty of ill.
 But soft—

Enter the MARQUIS DE' EBOLI.

The Marquis !

Mar. I can believe, sir, I am most unwelcome.

Des. Why so, my lord ? have I offended you ?

Mar. Our notions of offence, it may appear,
 Are widely different—Sir, I have heard,
 From one, whose nature 'tis to soften wrongs,
 Of insults deep you offer'd to a lady,
 Whom to protect is my best privilege :
 I boast no patience on a theme like this.

Des. I am not us'd to answer questions urg'd
 In tones so loud and high. Yet might I know
 If the offended lady thus inform'd you ?

Mar. You form conjectures with a happy
 shrewdness,
 And seem a man of many words—I hate them.
 A stranger in our country, you employ
 Your earliest hour of leisure to insult
 A lady, rich in the esteem of all.
 Was honor silent ? manly feeling dead ?
 When sex and loveliness found no distinction ?
 'Tis not your character alone degraded,
 But e'en your nation falls. Hereafter, sir,

Your countryman unjustly will complain,
Should their arrival find a colder welcome.

Des. My lord, 'tis easy to perceive your meaning.

You'll find I answer not such taunts as these
By words.

Mar. And explanation you refuse.

Des. When urg'd so proudly.

Mar. Th' alternative

Will soon occur to one so quick at guessing.

Des. I am prepar'd for it.

Mar. What! instantly?

Des. Instantly.

Mar. Then follow me—there is a place
Not distant far, will suit our purpose well.

Des. Lead on, my lord.

Exeunt.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment of the MARQUIS DE' EBOLI.*

MARCHIONESS, and her PAGE.

Marchioness.

But they escap'd unhurt—both, both unhurt.
Page. The marquis, madam, was but slightly
wounded,
A mere scratch in the sword arm—a mere
nothing.

March. And his antagonist! where, where
is he?

Page. Dear madam, no—what warm benevolence.

Thus anxious to consider e'en your foe.

March. This is no time for words—oh ! tell me all ;

Relieve my fears, or let me weep in sorrow.

Page. Rejoice then, madam, in their mutual safety :

At the first onset, all too warm for skill,
The marquis was disarm'd—to raise his hand
Against the man who nobly spar'd his life,
His soul refus'd—they separated, madam,
Each to the other wishing happiness.

March. Tis well—I breathe again—go, leave me, boy. *Exit Page.*

The order I obtain'd from government,
Enjoining his departure from Madrid,
Ere this is serv'd—he will for ever leave me :
For ever ! said I ? Why did he betray me ?

Enter LORD DORMER.

L. Dor. Madam, my friend.

March. How, wounded, say you ?

L. Dor. I will be more collected—pardon me

For thus alarming you with causeless fears.

March. He is not wounded then—so I have heard.

L. Dor. His contest with the marquis terminated

As all your anxious hopes could point.

March. Not so;
 Still more propitious were th' event to me,
 Had the receiver of so slight a wound
 Escap'd by giving it his adversary.

L. Dor. But now, this adversary claims your
 pity,
 For woes that would oppress a ruder spirit;
 Hard by your gate, as silently he stood,
 Attending my return, an officer
 Presented from authority an order,
 Commanding him expressly to depart
 From Spain, with penalties for disobeying.

March. As one, no doubt, whose contest with
 the marquis
 Bespoke a disposition wild and dang'rous.

L. Dor. The duel past, his mind, tho' gen-
 tle, warm,
 Had scarcely reassum'd its usual tone;
 And, madam, I must say, a fav'rite scheme,
 Where he had treasur'd up his choicest hopes,
 Had lately fail'd, and left him desolate.
 Thus ill prepar'd to suffer new affliction,
 The stern address with which the officer
 Perform'd his duty, vex'd and harrass'd him;
 High words between them pass'd, till my poor
 friend,
 (Alas! what griefs that so could irritate
 A temper form'd for every mildest duty !)
 Struck to the ground his rude antagonist.

March. And what follow'd?

L. Dor. A crowd collecting quickly,
Reliev'd the fallen man, and Desmond—

March. What would you say?

L. Dor. Was dragg'd to prison, madam.

March. To prison! say you? what! midst
the gaping crowd,

That scorn'd and hooted at him as he pass'd?

And was he treated as a common felon,

The refuse of the earth, loaded with crime?

Did the low minion of authority

Seize him by force, and mock him in his mis'ry?

Alas! I wildly talk—you see, my lord,

How warm an interest in all you wish

Possesses me. Yourself shall tidings bear

Of his deliverance—tis but t' explain.

Retires to a table, and writes.

L. Dor. She loves him still—Oh! could some
suasive power

Teach her, how easy tis to reconcile

This fond affection with the world's regard;

How men would still do homage to her name,

While in the hour of silence and retirement,

A mother's love might soften into smiles!

MARCHIONESS *returns with a letter.*

Madam, how shall my valued friend repay
The debt he owes you?

March. In your thanks, my lord.

Think you my influence could be employ'd
More as I wish, than in assisting him

Lord Dormer honours with the name of friend?

L. Dor. Deep in my heart, with all its pride united,

I feel this high distinguishing regard;

Yet when I mark'd the gen'rous zeal that pour'd Its warmest sorrow o'er my friend's misfortune, Forgive me, if the glow that flush'd your cheek, Seem'd of a brighter hue than friendship claims.

March. My lord, your language has of late assum'd

A flow'ry dress, that wounds the feelings more Than it offends the taste—away with it!

I love the plainness of a noble nature, These lofty tones resemble foppery.

L. Dor. Yes—yes—tis true—this cold disguise becomes

But ill the pray'r that trembles on my tongue.

March. Disguise and pray'r? most inauspicious prayer,

That dare not spring directly from the heart;

L. Dor. That heart now falls submissively before you,

Bleeding with sorrows stronger than it's own, That burst to have their way, yet fear the light;

Yet will I trust my cause to such a judge:

When you remember how I honor you,

How I adore you—that to you, alone,

I owe a blessing all too great for words,

You cannot err upon my motives—no—

You must ascribe my conduct to the wish

Alone of giving happiness to her,

From whom my own flows in such bounty o'er
me.

March. When did I doubt your purity of mind,
Or when refuse to hear you?

L. Dor. Never, never,
Yet now I tremble as I speak.

March. My lord,
Should this long prologue no result forbode,
Beneath yourself to speak, or me to hear,
What cause to tremble?

L. Dor. Pardon these suspicions ;
Yet why, why this reserve ? why so averse
To understand my meaning ? Madam, my friend,

March. Yes, what of him ? say, can I serve
him farther ?

L. Dor. Your resolutions then are firmly
fix'd !

Alas ! should my persuasions powerless fall,
Forget, forgive, or deem them still unheard.

March. I wait your wish.

L. Dor. Madam, I would believe,
At least, so partial hope would flatter me,
Your resolution to disown my friend
Who fain would boast—

March. My lord, beware ! my foes
Are rous'd, awake, and catch with eagerness
The darkest hint, and blazon it to day :
Where language fails, the sign, the nod, the
smile,

Fill up the chasm words have scarcely left.
There now is found an instrument most apt

To sanction malice—fly the base example :
 For you I gave up all—the sacred refuge,
 When still one sunny beam around me play'd,
 I gave to you—have I deserv'd this blow ?
 Tis not from you.

L. Dor. Yes ! more than life I owe you,
 And tis to soothe your bosom to its peace,
 To spread that sunny beam o'er all your days,
 I dare to speak—Madam, your son deserves
 That name.

March. My lord ! my lord !

L. Dor. Oh ! he is honour's throne ;
 Had I a secret buried in my heart
 Twin'd with the “ ties that bind me to the
 world,”

To him I would confide it, bold and fearless,
 And sleep, as still myself alone possess'd it.

March. Tis false.

L. Dor. What ! what is false ?

March. He is not that man.

L. Dor. You surely wrong him.

March. Yet can wrong exist,
 Where no necessity enforces right ?
 I know him not—he is a stranger to me ;
 He seems employ'd to slander and traduce me,
 Where is the wrong, if I assert my fame,
 Repel the evil, and detest the accuser ?

L. Dor. Listen but one brief moment, while
 I tell
 His proudest hope.

March. No more, my lord, I charge you.

L. Dor. Tis not his wish to be avow'd your son.

March. Perish that name! tis blackest slander all!

L. Dor. Hear him pronounce the sacred name of mother,

Nor spurn a sound that gently whispers peace.

March. I hate his malice—I despise his weakness.

L. Dor. When soft retirement gives those sacred names

Their best, their most authoritative sound,

Then let the son and mother fondly weep

On sorrows past—I'll hasten to his prison.

March. His prison? there let him die by slow disease;

In the deep dungeon, where the air confin'd,
Knows not the breeze of heav'n, or the change
Divine of night or morn, let chilling damps
Surround his brow, and sink into his heart;
Let galling iron waste his palsied limbs;
Let famine scowl with all her furies round him;
Or on the public scaffold, mock'd and scorn'd,
There let him expiate his crime, and pay
The life my injur'd fame demands.

L. Dor. Horror on horror. *Exit.*

March. I burn—I burn—oh! tis all madness here;

But soft, soft, let me think, my son in prison?
Subject to all its dire calamities,
All the dread curses a revengeful mother

Could dare to imprecate? Almighty powers!
 Yet I will save him—yes, he shall survive
 To grace the world—tho' not, tho' not for me.

Exit.

SCENE II.—*A Prison.* DESMOND *alone.*

Des. Is this the welcome to my native land?*
 Is this the fairy region, warmly glowing
 With golden hues, beneath affection's rays?
 Bear up my soul, and if thou canst, rejoice
 Still in the dignity of rectitude.
 Oh mother! yet no mother! why thus doom
 To dark despair the son that could adore thee?

Enter PROVOST.

How soon will my confinement satisfy
 The malice of that man?

Pro. Tis not the man,
 Offended law you have to satisfy.

* Spain, a country where every civil and criminal process is determined by weight of metal and interest, which they term Empenos. When a servant of Lord G.'s was wantonly murdered by an invalid soldier, the secretary of state told his lordship, that, if he chose to have the offender hanged, there would be no difficulty, as a poor soldier could have no friends to apply or make Empenos for him. In cases like these, justice may sometimes take its course, if they are not too lazy to execute it.—Swinburne's *Travels*, p. 381.

Des. When shall I be releas'd?

Pro. Justice moves slowly,

Should not some person, high in dignity,
Exert himself to plead in your behalf.

Des. Too wretched, wretched country! where
the law

Bought by the rich, to subjugate the poor,
Strikes deeper still the wounds by fortune given,
And punishes no crime but poverty.

Yet why complain? what is the world to me?
Should this drear vault become its sister-grave,
No tear shall fall for my untimely fate.

Pro. I cannot choose but pity the poor youth!

Des. She, she, who should have mourn'd
with madd'ning woe,

And strew'd my tomb with her dishevell'd hair,
Will smile and laugh thro' all the welcome tale.

Pro. (Aside) I ne'er saw one so worthy my
compassion

As this young foreigner. If it were not
Against the oath of duty and my office,
To give him liberty—how light his fault! *Exit.*

Des. See there! by heav'n he pities me!—
even he

Whose stern employ must quench the heav'nly
spark

Of sympathy, laments his fellow man.

Is it for her, whose sex forms her for all

The softest feelings of humanity,

And bound by nature's strictest, holiest tie,

For her alone to spurn me and oppress me?

Enter LORD DORMER.

L. Dor. Do we meet thus?

Des. My dungeon is within.

Your looks proclaim my fate—well, be it so,
 'Twas not enough my life should be expos'd
 In contest with her husband—had I fallen
 She had been satisfied—as I survive,
 The gloomy horrors of a prison wait me.

L. Dor. Who but must weep, to pause and
 meditate

On the mix'd character of mortal life ;
 E'en those of heav'nly mould, by nature form'd
 To emulate the soaring poet's dream,
 Who follow virtue with a passion's warmth,
 And with fond zealous industry collect
 The scatter'd opportunities of good,
 They rise so high to fall a lower depth ;
 Some cherish'd feeling, lurking long unseen,
 Rous'd by the transient touch of accident,
 Starts into action with resistless force,
 And virtue's lovely fabric tears away.

Des. I trace the windings of her policy :
 Had my wrung bosom felt a colder pang,
 Had this unhappy nature borne the wrong,
 Her patience then had tried the exile's mandate,
 Or thus imprison'd me for disobeying.

L. Dor. My hapless friend !

Des. Away these gloomy thoughts !

Say, Dormer, are my prophecies fulfill'd ?
 Are you restor'd to happiness and Julia ?

L. Dor. What ! have you leisure, mid such
deep'ning woes,
To dwell upon another's bliss ?

Des. Dormer,
Standing alone, as I am, in the world,
The current of my blood check'd and damm'd up,
Cut off from nature's highest privilege,
No mother, sister, relative, to soothe
With soft affection's tones my lonely hours,
All the blest feelings, that in happier men
Flow thro' a thousand channels, find in me
But one direction, eddying round my friend.
Then pour your joys in my attentive ear ;
Yet no—for who would tear the sacred veil,
That hides from common gaze love's secrecy,
The beaming smile of reconcil'd distress,
The glance that promises eternal truth ?

L. Dor. Alas ! what sad experience taught
that sigh,

To chill the glowing picture of your fancy ?

Des. Yes, yes, I knew a Julia once, lovely
As yours, and oh ! as well belov'd ; but heā'n,
(Let me not murmur at his great decree)
When she had scarcely told her eighteenth year,
Tore her from earth—where shall I fly for
refuge ?

Where in the dark drear desert of the world,
Shall such a wretch as I am find a home ?

L. Dor. Fly to the friendship of the man
that knows you ;
Still ! still sustain him by your great example,

Still lead the way in virtue, honor, glory,
 Mark where your country bleeds by secret
 wounds,

And boldly teach that policy is justice.
 We pass'd the studies of our youth together,
 Let us grow old, our thoughts the same, our
 efforts

By prudence greater.

Des. How low am I sunk!

When all this manly counsel distant seems,
 And reaches not my heart ! I hate myself.

L. Dor. My Julia I will teach to love her
 brother.

Des. As the destroyer of her mother's peace,
 As the intruder on her fondest hopes,
 As a poor outcast, every where unknown,
 Unfriended, unacknowledg'd, spurn'd, rejected ;
 I saw a wretch just now, my fit companion,
 Him will I live with, buried from the world,
 And there forget that world—which owns not
 me.

L. Dor. Desmond, what mean you ? who,
 who is this wretch ?

Des. Hard by the western gate you mark'd
 the pile

That rears its front in ancient majesty :
 The neighbouring convent proves its sacred use.
 Sequester'd there, in holy guise, there dwells
 A man whose crimes exclude him from mankind,
 And from the hopes of blest futurity ;
Thro' twenty years he drags his suff'ring frame,

Yet from the grave's dark brink still starts with
horror.

L. Dor. Did he disclose his guilt?

Des. Thro' all its progress.

His hollow voice struck on my wond'ring ear,
As thro' the holy aisle it murmur'd low ;
When I approach'd and spoke, he shudd'ring
drew

His hood upon his brow, and pass'd away ;
But turning quick, from his dark eye he shot
A side-long glance, that in a moment seem'd
To measure me at full, and to decide
Each feature of my character ; then placing
Himself before me, slow perus'd my face,
And I perceiv'd a tear break from its fount,
That had appear'd dried up, and void, and
course

Along his furrow'd cheek, worn deep by care,
Rather than age—resolving, hesitating,
His words, half utter'd, unexplain'd, were lost,
Till confidence, encreasing as he gaz'd,
He pour'd his guilt and sorrow all before me.

L. Dor. Tis very strange—what is his history ?

Des. I tremble to repeat—by passion mad-
den'd,

A lady high in family seducing,
By arts I fear too horrible to name,
For still her spotless virtue was his praise,

L. Dor. Did he not marry her ?

Des. He was married ;

But to obtain an union with his victim,

Murder'd his wife ! the sword of law was sheath'd
 In gold, but still one monitor remain'd,
 Unbought, unbrib'd, whose awful voice gave
 judgment,

An sentenc'd him to cloister'd solitude,
 To dwell with his own thoughts in mute despair.

L. Dor. Say, did you learn his name ?

Des. I spar'd the wretch
 The dread confession.

L. Dor. Twenty years, said you ?
 The lady in misfortune still rever'd,
 As virtue's brightest model or its theme !
 And gazing on you with an eye of fondness,
 As you resembled one he once had lov'd !

Des. What thought is this ? it was a father's
 gaze,
 It is, it is, it must be so—in prison ?
 I had endur'd it patiently till now.
 One moment's freedom would I gladly purchase,
 By my whole life pass'd here—by life itself.

L. Dor. Be calm—be calm—my friends are
 high in rank.
 Trust me, their power can ope these gloomy
 gates
 I leave you to solicit your release.

Des. Haste, Dormer, haste—you leave me
 on the rack,
 A moment's liberty is all I ask. *Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Another Apartment in the Prison.*

PROVOST, *the MARCHIONESS veiled.*

March. The order ! you'll receive it on the moment,

You may anticipate—look on this ring.

You cannot doubt my word, so deeply pledg'd,
Were I to tell my name, you'd quickly own,
How ill deceit became a rank like mine,
My birth secures you—go, go, release him.

Pro. I will obey, tho' at some hazard, lady.

Exit.

March. Oh ! I am faint—yes, I must rest awhile.

(*Sinks on a chair and unveils.*)

What noise was that ? haply the final groan !
The last, sad, earthly effort of despair,
And the vex'd spirit flies to meet it's doom :
Where am I ? I will try to leave these horrors.

Rises.

Enter the MARQUIS.

Mar. Amelia, your disguise but ill conceals
The purpose of your visit, or its object.
What shall I think of your mysterious conduct ?

The frequent start, the ever ready tear,
 And now the bold desertion of your rank,
 To walk on foot thro' Madrid's crowded streets,
 And at the prison gate solicit entrance.

March. It is enough, enough—the dreaded hour is come.

Mar. Surely I am not of suspicious nature.

March. Haste to thy grave—yes, yes, it is prepar'd.

Mar. Why not repose on this adoring breast ?

March. Unbar, ye ministers, the gloomy cell.
 Pour forth its care-worn tenant, to behold
 One plung'd in deeper mis'ry than him,
 And let him smile again.

Mar. Confide in me.

March. Never, my lord—I have respected you,
 But confidence I promis'd not, I cannot give.
 Why should you wish it ? other means there are
 To satisfy your thoughts—each action mark,
 Each footprint trace, search in my looks,
 Each casual word ! note it—and set it down.
 You have inquiries now. I would not check them.

Mar. When I observe you thus forsake your house,

One curious glance may easily be forgiven
 To love so strong as mine.

March. Remain, my lord,
 And gratify your curiosity.
 Ask why I came, and how I was employ'd,

With whom I spoke, whose name escap'd my
lips,

What thoughts these eyes too eloquently told,
If mirth gave flippant quickness to my words,
Or sorrow drew them out to tedious length,
All this and more, and should the story falter,
Let shrewd suspicion give it all its length.

Exit.

Mar. Who is this object of opposing passions ?
She hates, yet loves—and seeks him, yet avoids.
She spurns him now, now visits him in prison.
She must be virtuous, or the radiant forms,
That confidence inspire in mortal breasts,
Are as the passing air unstable all,
And earth itself a fabl'd mockery.

Exit.

SCENE III.—*The Church, DON FERDINAND asleep at the foot of the Altar.*

TWO MONKS.

1st Monk. How sound he sleeps !

2nd Monk. Such slumber is not usual.

1st. Monk. The dreams of guilty men are horrible.

2nd Monk. Yet sometimes are the messengers,
'tis said,

Of joy and hope, and bright forms introduce,
The dawn dispels.

1st Monk. Have you observ'd him long ?

2nd Monk. My glass has almost run its sandy hour,

Since first I mark'd him on his stony couch :
His whole frame trembl'd once with strong alarm,
And he pronounc'd the words, spare me, oh spare !

1st Monk. Unhappy man !

2nd Monk. But, brother, hear, what follow'd !
A sudden smile beam'd from his countenance,
'Twas such a smile, as we are wont to fancy,
In spirits elect, around the living throne,
Hymning eternal praises—rapt, I gaz'd,
And quick, methought, his rude and care-worn
features,

Assum'd the rosy hue of guiltless youth.

Not the possession of a thousand worlds,
Had brib'd me, brother, to disturb him then.

1st Monk. Well, well, his penitence has been sincere,
And this is its reward—on, on, good brother.

Exeunt.

Enter DESMOND.

Tumultuous thoughts chase one another on,
And scarce my passive mind sustains their progress :

What ho ! awake, arise !

Ferd. My guardian angel !
Oh, I have seen such visions in my slumber ;
Methought, a purple cloud, with glory circl'd,

That shot its starry points on all sides far,
 Came gliding down the blue expanse of ether,
 And rested on a flow'ry hill before me.
 Then from the low'ring centre forth there stepp'd
 A form of blended majesty and love :
 Youthful he was, yet awful—on his brow
 Enthron'd sat dignity, but his soft eye
 Scein chrystallized by tears for human frailty.
 He held the lyre divine, and with the touch
 Of zephyr swept the golden wire that breath'd
 Heaven's harmony—the theme surpassed the
 song :

'Twas peace on earth—benevolence to men.

Des. Forgive intrusion on these sacred glories,
 Prophetic, I would hope, of future bliss.
 No common feelings guide my venturous tongue ;
 You, you, alone, can solve a doubt that vibrates,
 Thro' every fibre of my tortured frame.

Ferd. Speak, I will answer you : why hesitate ?

Des. Tell me the name of her, the fatal fair,
 Whose charms resistless sway'd your youthful
 breast,

And rais'd your hand to do the murd'rous deed,

Ferd. Peace, peace ! oh any task but this
 impose,

And my consent shall e'en out-run your words.

Des. By the blest hours of careless infancy,
 When to the throne of heav'n your thoughts
 aspir'd,

Untainted, undisguis'd—by all th' affection

Your parents bore you—by their honor'd shades,
 By the unhappy death of her who own'd
 The first emotions of your earliest love,
 By your repented guilt, and these new hopes
 Breath'd as you slept before the sacred altar:

Ferd. By these, and more, I've sworn deep
 to conceal

That name: spare me.

Des. Was—was that name d' Alvarez?

Ferd. You touch a chord, that, as it vibrates,
 breaks.

Des. Was it Amelia d' Alvarez?

Ferd. What fiend art thou
 From lowest depths of hell remorseless sent,
 With Gorgon serpents arm'd to gnaw and sting
 me.

Des. Yet answer me, was, was her name
 d' Alvarez.

Ferd. All gracious powers forgive me! 'twas
 d' Alvarez.

Des. Then let me call you by the name of
 father.

Ferd. Pray, mock me not, young man, my
 woes

O'erflow already.

Des. Will you then disown me?

Is none so wretched as to call me son?

Ferd. Yes, I should know that eye all elo-
 qent,

That countenance, how like to that I once
 Ador'd with such devotion: touch me not,

Lest in my arms the wrath of heaven should fall,
At once confounding innocence and guilt.

Des. No, no, the ruler of that heaven applauds,
When thus a son receives his long lost father.

Rushes into his arms.

Ferd. My son ! my son !

Des. Oh happiness !

Ferd. Speak not

Of happiness—far from the shelt’ring arm
Of fond paternal love, you have encounter’d
Adversity in all its rudest forms.

And now still more unfortunate you find
A wretched exile, driven by crimes unheard,
From haunts of men, adul’trous, murderous,
With crimes so deep, as almost to distrust
Almighty mercy, him, you find a father.
I must lament to think of all I might have been,
And what I am—’tis you have given me tears !
Indeed I thought I ne’er should weep again.

Well—well—well—say when saw you your mother,

Where is she ?

Des. In Madrid.

Ferd. In health ?

Des. In health.

Ferd. Great God, receive my thanks, but is
she happy ?

Well I remember her bright day of glory.
When in youth’s rosy pride she walk’d the round
Of highest fashion, by her playful wit

Disarming envy of its pois'nous shaft,
 Securing empire by disdaining it.
 Cheer'd by the zephyr of the prosp'rous south,
 Uprose the flow'r, of winter's cold regardless,
 Till the rude blast, impower'd with double fury,
 Laid all its beauty low—tell me, my son,
 Does she pronounce the name of Ferdinand?

Des. Compose your harrass'd soul—deeply re-tir'd

Within yon sacred chancel, we'll recount
 Each to the other at our leisure, all
 The wond'rous incidents that mark our lives:
 Pause o'er the thoughts meek penitence inspires,
 Yet deeply grieve, as all such thoughts were
 vain,
 With trembling flight approach that blest abode,
 Where e'en the best must fear, the worst may
 hope.

Exeunt.

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the house of the MARQUIS.*

Enter the MARCHIONESS and DESMOND.

Marchioness.

HOW long, sir, will your visits thus insult me?

To talk of honour were superfluous,
With him, who tramples on a woman's fame,
But the just feelings of a wounded pride,
Might sure prevent the second degradation,
Of a repulse repeated.

Des. Yet reflect
Upon my thoughts, my hopes, my wishes, motives.

March. I cannot search beyond your actions,
sir ;
Their tendency appears to stain my name,
To draw the finger of derision on me,
Both thro' the shady walks of sacred home,
And where the public pour their louder censure.

Motives ! the constant cant of hypocrites,
 Or, at the best, a poor apology,
 To acquit the heart by sacrifice of judgment.
 When the assassin strikes the murd'rous blow,
 When the fell sland'rer darts his poison round,
 When the seducer triumphs o'er his victim,
 Yes, one and all, in the extreme of crime,
 Shall plead their motives, and demand forgive-
 ness.

Des. So warm in indignation Madam ?

March. So greatly wrong'd.

Des. Madam, I come not now
 To sting you by reproaches, or solicit
 Favour ; ere yet I leave Madrid for ever,
 'Tis all my wish to do an act of justice,
 Restoring you your own.

March. Well, sir, proceed.

Ye heav'nly powers ! when shall my trials cease ?

Des. In the affection of your son who loves
 you,
 Your son, who still adores you.

March. Yet uncheck'd ?
 But by this second injury you prove
 How weak to take no vengeance on the first !

Des. No vengeance ? Were it not my settled
 purpose
 To spare upbraidings at an hour like this,
March. Whate'er that purpose—speak it and
 withdraw :
 Inflict those tortures you affect to pity,

Destroying, supplicate, and kneeling stab.

Des. Hear then the intent that brought me to
your presence :

Nurs'd as I was in indolence and wealth,
Tho' from the hour of lisping innocence,
I wanton'd soft on pleasure's lap of roses,
I spurn its luxuries, its fragrant joys,
Stung by the thorn that keenest wounds the
soul,

An obligation from the hand of one,
Who mocks and laughs at all my dearest claims ;
Here will you find a solemn restitution
Of the rich blessings of your bounteous hand ;
What should I do with wealth ? a lonely being,
Disown'd, rejected, unacknowledg'd, banish'd,
Blest with no friend but heaven, the friend of all,
I have no use for riches—they are yours.

Offering a paper.

March. What ! would you bribe me to destroy
myself ?

Was this your purpose ? this your proud intent ?
Doubtless some motive hangs upon your lips ;
Some wrung affection still will be ground,
Whence thus you make me your unpitied mark,
And aim your weapons—poison'd—impotent.

Des. Can it then be as pestilence you spurn
me,

Can you oppress me with such deep reproaches ?
Why are the feelings of your nature silent ?
Why, why refuse to own your long lost son ? .
But I entreat you, pardon me, 'twas not
My wish to say so much—your words extort it.

I would but satisfy the rules of honor,
And guiltless stand of mercenary views.

March. Honor? oh sacred word, how mis-
applied!

Tis but another name for excellence,
The last fine polish of the virtuous mind,
That nicely balances its means and purpose,
And seeks no object thro' disgraceful paths.

Des. Pause but a moment to imagine one
From childhood rais'd above the common fate,
In education, wealth, and circumstance.
Along the tide of smooth prosperity
His little bark, with purple pendants flying,
Each breeze that urg'd him, full, not dangerous,
Sail'd beauteous on—envied his passage was;
Thro' twenty years he won his glitt'ring way.
Just then he lost the pilot he had lov'd,
Both as the guide and author of the voyage,
Ah, fond deceit! the guide he was, the author
In distant regions dwelt, of glorious name,
Of softer sex, more lovely and more lov'd,
In virtue as in beauty all unequall'd.

March. Away! away! these swelling tones
of praise,
E'en should the object really merit them,
(But much I doubt such wild extravagance)
Would sound like flatt'ring treachery.

Des. They are the tones of supplicating an-
guish.

March. Go—go—meanly you have conspir'd
against
My spotless fame, to be despis'd for this,

Supposing you could injure it.

Des. By Heavens, these stern upbraidings fire
my soul to anger

And change my patience to degrading meanness :
Language like this would flush the old man's
cheek

With boundless rage. Yes, I abjure entreaties,
They have no force between a son and mother.

March. Where is the force that can supply
their place ?

Or make your menace greater than a word ?

Des. Still is that force on earth : when next
we meet,

A witness I will bring, whose evidence
You will not contradict, yes, e'en the tomb
Shall utter forth a voice to prove my claims.

Exit.

March. The tomb shall utter forth a voice ?
what meant he ?

Will the destroyer of my youthful hopes
Wake from the grave to persecute me still ?
How numberless the woes that weigh me down !
A little while, and this worn frame shall sink
Into the grave—the vital fount is dry ;
My pulse beats low—The dead pronounce
against me ?

Twas but the warm expression of his anger,
To frenzy kindl'd by my cruelty.
Alas ! had I indulg'd a softer tone,
Or dar'd but to expostulate, my soul
Had caught the fond infection of my lips,

And thrown me at his feet—that must not be.

Enter JULIA.

My sweetest Julia ! come my child, sit by me,
 And let us talk of all your golden hopes,
 When wedded to the only man deserving
 So rich a prize, my dearest girl shall reign,
 The cherish'd ruler of his noble life,
 Her smiles his best reward, a tear, my love ?

Julia. I cannot leave you.

March. But should I leave you !

You are surprised—well, let it pass—when saw
 you

Your Father ?

Julia. Now—he left me on the moment.

March. And said he ought of me ?

Julia. He seem'd disturb'd,
 But when I urg'd him to reveal the cause
 Of his distress, he turn'd away and left me.
 I fear, I have displeas'd him.

March. No, no, fear not,
 Sing me that song, my love, Lord Dormer gave
 you :

Soft shall it pour its melancholy tones,
 Tho' fiction now has lost its power to charm,
 Those days are pass'd.

(*Julia sings, and the curtain slowly falls.*)

Whose is yon bier that crowds the ways,
 Pale virgins weep around,

And from the black pall turn their gaze,
 To dew the kindred ground.
 Beauty and youth, alas ! lie buried there :
 Weep, virgins, weep, tis pity's genuine tear.

SCENE II.—*An Apartment of LORD DORMER'S.*

LORD DORMER alone.

L. Dor. Astonishment and horror still possess me.
 And hold divided empire with my Julia.
 To find his father thus !

Enter DESMOND.

Desmond ! how is it with you ?

Des. Wreck'd, wreck'd of every hope on
 this side heav'n :
 Wand'ring alone upon the barren strand
 Of life—an outcast wretch.

L. Dor. This wild despair
 Announces all is lost—I bleed for you.

Des. She tortur'd her indignant mind for
 forms
 Of fell abhorrence and disgust, and left
 Her sex's softness, harshly to pronounce,
 Expressions full of taunting cruelty.

L. Dor. Was she surpriz'd at your escape
from prison?

Des. One feeling only occupied her soul:
The pois'nous rancour of malignant hate.

L. Dor. 'Twas she, 'twas she, that gave you
back to freedom.

Des. No, no, believe it not—though for th'
offence,

E'en she might deem the punishment sufficient.

L. Dor. But you address'd her angrily, I fear,
And urg'd your claims with too much violence.

Des. Trust me! most scrupulously careful
was I,

No accidental word should leave my lips,
That malice might condemn, or misinterpret.
No service I entreated her, no favor
Did I solicit, 'twas my wish alone
Most justly to restore the property
She had conferr'd upon the son she hates:
I bow'd submissive to her keen reproach,
I uttered no complaint.

L. Dor. Tis very strange:

Des. Tis more than strange? still there is one
resource:

To that I fly—Who could longer bear
Thus to be trampled on:

L. Dor. Deep from my soul
I pity you, yet tho' your hapless fate
Pervades my mind, chasing each other thought,
I can devise no remedy.

Des. Yes, yes,

Dormer there's one—and I will use it quickly.

L. Dor. What mean you?

Des. She shall meet Don Ferdinand.

L. Dor. Meet him? Don Ferdinand? the fell seducer,

The sanguinary fiend, to whom she owes
Twenty long years of sighs, and groans, and
tears:

Confront her with Don Ferdinand? the thought
Checks the warm current of my blood, and
freezes

Each motion of my frame to stiffen'd horror.

All righteous heaven! blast him, as he moves
His step to meet her—take his forfeit life!

Ye sacred powers! that guard the good and fair,
What ~~had~~ she been, had that man ne'er existed!
We read ~~of~~ arts like his, and weep to madness
O'er the dread visions of the poet's fancy:
What, were it thought the pitiless tragedy
Had e'er been acted on the stage of life!

Des. Forgive me, Dormer, 'twas a transient
thought,

Conceiv'd in anger: I resign it all,
Yet spare this keen invective on my father.

L. Dor. Tis I must pray forgiveness from you
Desmond.

And I must trespass on your patience still,
Thro' counsel harsh, tho' as I hope, convincing.

Des. I know your constant friendship and
your zeal

That oft outruns your judgment in my favor :
 I have a shrewd conjecture of your meaning,
 But let me not anticipate : say on.

L. Dor. What you have seen of this most noble woman,
 Must in your mind decide her character.
 Her purpose, you observe, if right or wrong,
 Twere needless now to argue, is unshaken :
 Her's are not feelings of the fleeting moment,
 That rise, and rise, but still to pass away,
 Not as mere passions sway they, acting e'er
 As steady principles.

Des. Most true, alas !

L. Dor. It is the cherish'd object of her life,
 Dearer than life itself, to bear unstained
 The name transmitted thro' an endless line,
 Drawn from a throne, that once o'erlook'd the world.

To force her to resign the darling thought,
 Were an attempt of deepest tyranny,
 Whose dreadful consequence I dare not name.
 And should her son direct the fatal blow ?
 That son, whose youthful path she deck'd with flowers,

Still as she strew'd them, weeping she could grant
 No more ?

Des. You are a stern adviser, Dormer,
 But tho' your words probe deeply, I confess
 My state required such remedy.

L. Dor. Return
 To the mix'd duties of a manly life,

Enjoy the wealth your noble mother gave you,
 And mourn with her the tyranny of men;
 Pursue the paths your talents point to fame,
 And send a name renown'd across the sea,
 To tinge her faded cheek with secret pride;
 And if my friendship still you deign to prize,
 Trust me you have it wholly--never held I
 A man so near my heart, as one compleat
 In all the virtues of that sacred name.

Des. Oh thou! that gav'st me such a friend
 to bless me!

Teach me to esteem him as I ought. Dormer,
 You rouse the man that meanly sunk within me:
 No! no! she does not hate me—she shall tri-
 umph

In her son's fame—and on your yearly visits,
 Haply from her a whisper'd wish you'll bring,
 That she might own me to the public gaze,
 And tell the race my life had not dishonor'd.
 Be it so—the time allotted me in Spain
 Is almost past—I will but say farewell
 To my unhappy father, and prepare
 For my departure.

L. Dor. I, in th' interval
 Will pay my promis'd visit to my Julia. *Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A Street.*

Enter LORD DORMER and DESMOND.

L. Dor. This is my way, farewell. *Exit.*

Des. And mine points here,
He should not leave me—now my spirits ebb,
And in his absence resolution fails.

Enter DON FERDINAND.

My father here!

Ferd. My son, you wake remembrances within me,
That rob yon holy pile of all its charms;
Your form fills up the void of solitude,
And I pursue it as reality :
E'en on my prayers past scenes intrusive break,
And boldly violate the sacred altar.

Des. Come enter then this lighter residence,
My valued friend's : its freest use is mine :
That there retir'd we may beguile an hour,
And blend the secrets of our hearts together.

Ferd. But say, will not the noisy world pursue
Our steps, and chase with idle merriment
The solemn thoughts that suit a state like mine?

Des. Knew you my noble friend, your fears
would cease,
Tis tranquil cheerfulness around him reigns,

A foe to boist'rous mirth, and all its vot'ries.

Ferd. Lead on my son—your will is all in all.

Exeunt.

SCENE IV.—*An Apartment in the House of the MARQUIS.*

The MARCHIONESS and JULIA.

March. Yes! I remember—'twas at eve, me-thinks,

A month is scarcely past, and melancholy
Weigh'd on my mind, and much we talk'd,
Of that illustrious lady of our race,
Wife of great Ferdinand of Aragon.

Julia. When I presum'd to chide your rising
sigh,

As woe too cherish'd for a life like this.

March. The noble lady, guiltless of all ill,
Shrunk from the rude suspicions of her lord,
And pin'd away and died—the tale is told,
With the simplicity of ancient time.

Julia. Tis pitiful, and who but must admire
The lady's character?

March. Observe, my child;
It shews how precious virtue is to all,
When e'en the bare suspicion of its loss
To noble minds is death.

Julia. Calm, calm my mother,
This agitation.

March. Julia, I am not well,
You would not think, that for these fourteen
days

Sleep has ne'er shed its blessing on my eyes :
I feel I weakly totter on the grave,
And e'en a breath would throw me in—weep not,
Nay—nay—perhaps I err—my fancy sickens
Beneath the burthen of my sinking frame.

Enter LORD DORMER.

Oh, my dear lord ! ne'er was your presence half
So welcome here—this tender girl will weep
For her poor mother's ills, but you shall check
The falling tear, and sometimes as you sit
Around your English hearth, on winter's eve,
In fond regret, not totally unmix'd
With pleasing recollections, you shall think
Of her that lov'd you both, how well ! how
fondly !

Alas ! I faint, give me your arm a little :
There, I am better now—lead me to the air.
Look up, my Julia, now I'm well, quite well.
The air would do me good, and I remember,
You spoke of paintings you had just received
From England—we have not seen them. My
Julia

Should learn to judge of English excellence.

L. Dor. I fear the danger of this new fatigue.

Julia. You talk'd of sleepless nights?

March. Of sleepless nights?

Alas! was that the worst! last night, my father,

L. Dor. Why, why that quivering lip? that starting tear?

March. Just as he liv'd—in form and voice the same—

He stood before me—nor was I slumb'ring then,
But ev'ry object as distinct as now.

In his right hand an ancient scroll he held,
Which slow unrolling, he display'd at large
The lengthen'd line of our illustrious race:
My name was last, scarce legible to sight:
Averting quick his streaming eyes from me
He bent them on the scroll, and paus'd and shud-
dered,

And fast his tears bedew'd my failing name,
Till all its characters were wash'd away,

L. Dor. To live for ever in the hearts of all,
Recorded, where destruction cannot reach
Your daughter's bright example and her glory,
The long transmitted theme of num'rous friends,
Aye in the poor man's orisons remember'd,
The orphan's morning hymn, the widow's sigh.

March. Hush, hush, my lord, the world will
hear and laugh,

Support me to the air, we will return
E'en on the moment—I feel 'twill do me good:
The distance, well you know, is nothing,
nothing.

Give me your arm, my lord, and yours my
Julia :

There, I am happy now.

Exeunt.

SCENE V.—*An Apartment of LORD DORMER'S.*

DON FERDINAND and DESMOND.

Ferd. Never, my son, I will not leave my
country.

Yours has no seat secluded from the world,
Where guilt may pine in secret solitude,
Till distant hope shoots forth its faintest rays
To bless the raptur'd sight : this holy vest
That here reminds me of the thorny path
I have to tread laborious, I must leave.
No, no, your land for me is all too garish.

Des. To-morrow then, alone, I shall embark
For England—Oh ! how ill was answered here
The purpose of my visit !

Ferd. You have learnt
The danger of the passions uncontrol'd :
How keen remorse pursues the guilty deed,
Tho' law o'erlooks, and cloister'd darkness veils.

Des. But oft the means that heav'n bestows
employ :
Let frequent letters still convey your thoughts :
I want no trivial news of states and thrones,

Describe each various working of your mind,
Where hope illumes, where dark despair op-
presses.

Ferd. This guilty hand still trembling with
its crime,

Shall write no characters that speak of peace.
You bade me smile, and I, presumptuous
wretch,

Pursued the syren voice of filial love.

Des. That voice prophetic of almighty mercy.

Ferd. No more—no more—the conscience
knows no flatt'ry !

I had a word to say—it is mere justice :
Ere you depart, I must repeat to you,
(Tho' the recital chills me still with horror)
That part of my most guilty history,
Where all that's lovely in creation fell
My sacrifice—I will be more explicit :
Her noble father, dying, had bequeath'd her
To a near female relative, whose wants
Were ill supplied by a too scanty fortune.
My wealth was at this heedless guardian's feet.
She gave me constant access to her house,
Where, all secluded with her beauteous niece,
Day after day I pass'd, till eve stole on
And seem'd to meet the morning : honorable
My vows appear'd, and were as such receiv'd.
Your mother lov'd, but with a purity
That heightened all the charms to me forbidden.
I will not fright you with a wild detail
Of thoughts repented oft, to be resum'd.

One night a slight indisposition shook
 Her tender frame, and med'cine was advis'd
 Of opiate qualities to lull the pain :
 The hour and opportunity conspir'd,
 And my fell passions into madness flam'd.
 From my hand she received the fatal cup,
 So deeply drugg'd, that sleep was all but
 death.

Tranc'd in my arms the sleeping beauty lay,
 Till waking horrors stung her spotless soul.

Des. Alas ! alas !

Ferd. My son, I know not what has seiz'd
 My burning brain, but midnight darkness
 Reigns around me—horrid forms pass by, and
 tho'

My waking sense proclaims the strong delusion,
 Still, still, they blast me with their looks of
 scorn.

There, there's a body writhing in agony,
 And the mouth gasps—the cheek is lovely still.
 Yonder's a new made grave, and by its side
 The king of terrors points, as tho' twere mine.
 And here there comes, as if twere all herself
 A little faded, but in grace the same :

Des. Just heaven ! what do I see ?

Enter the MARCHIONESS, JULIA, and LORD DORMER.

Ferd. Yet sickness makes

Her step infirm—she walks with difficulty.

(*The MARCHIONESS on seeing DON FERDINAND shrieks and falls into the arms of LORD DORMER.*)

Ferd. It is herself ! I heard that cry before.

L. Dor. Desmond, why, why, have you done this ?

Des. Fate waves around us her severest scourge,

And all is anguish, present and to come.

Ferd. Awake, awake, my soul, to this new horror :

This is the chastisement that shall redeem

Eternal pains—oh ! lovely victim ! cold

And lifeless !

Julia. Break ye stubborn heart-strings, break. What dreadful shock benumbs each feeling thus ?

There is some horrid mystery in this,

Ye guardian angels let it pass away !

March. I saw him, and the dead proclaim against me.

No, no, 'tis but a vision of my brain.

(*Sinks again into the arms of LORD DORMER, who supports her to a chair.*)

L. Dor. Don Ferdinand and Desmond, pray you leave us ;

Should she conceive your presence but delusive, All may be well.

Julia. Ye powers of mercy grant All may be well !

March. I saw him—he was here

But now.

L. Dor. Saw who?

March. Don Ferdinand himself.

Oh! do not you conspire against my peace.
I heard he was alive—my son it was
That told me—you shall hear him say
How fatally he wrong'd me!

L. Dor. Be composed.

March. I am too weak for contest with you
now:

But yet, methinks, 'twould soothe me, ere I
die,

And stay my sinking spirit to entreat him,

L. Dor. My dearest madam, cast your gaze
around,

See your lov'd daughter—Julia, speak to her.

March. I must not thus be treated as a
child,

My lord, I am very certain he was here:

And by the sacred pledge of this dear girl,
Whom I have given you—I pray recall him.

(DON FERDINAND comes forward.)

I feel obliged—yes, yes, tis he—is it not?

To say the truth my eyes distinguish little:

(To Ferd.) I have a small request to make you,
sir,

You see your victim tott'ring on the grave,

Tell these my friends I did not fall in will:

Ferd. Your soul was spotless as that radiant
form;

Pure as your sister excellence above:

Each thought refin'd, each action delicate,
 Virtue herself was rob'd in charms unknown,
 And those who fear'd before, were taught to love
 her.

March. Deeply I thank you—you will be believ'd

By my dear friends—and for the sland'rous
 world,

I feel myself escaping from its power !

Julia. My dearest mother, how that world
 adores you !

Ferd. Now hear me yet, a moment: you recur

To that dread time, or I had still been silent :
 To make you all the reparation left
 Within my power—to call you mine for ever,
 My wife, my lawful wife, her who was so,

March. Was you then married ?

Ferd. I was married :

My love for you flam'd out in difficulties;
 They rose as high as heav'n, I o'erleapt them :
 But a fell murderer I could not bring
 To those pure arms—mine, mine, were stain'd
 with blood.

March. I faint—I faint—and on my bosom
 falls

A suffocating weight—it will not leave me.

Des. In mercy spare me not—all righteous
 heav'n !

This second heavier murder, I committed.

March. Whose voice was that? my son's, I think, was it not?

He is my son—be not surpriz'd, my Julia,
Your mother was not guilty—you heard that.

Julia. Guilty! Oh heavens!

March. Your father seem'd suspicious:
That was not well—but I forgive him quite,
I forgive all—tis dark, tis very dark;
Dormer, it was not you that gave this wound:
You did not cause this interview, 'twas chance.

L. Dor. Guiltless am I!

March. No, no, twas fate resistless:
My son, draw near—love and protect your
sister,

Receive a blessing from your dying mother.
Kiss me, my Julia—she is yours, my lord,
She is all excellent—I know no fault.

Most fortunate in you: 'tis past, 'tis past.
To him, who gave it, I commend my soul.
Receive it father, pardon as I pardon. *Dies.*

L. Dor. Julia, my dearest love, she does but faint.

She soon will wake again.

Julia. Never—never—

Wake, wake, my mother, 'tis your Julia calls,
Your poor despairing Julia—you lov'd her once,
And now you leave her to the desert world,
No guardian hand to shield her from destruction.

Enter the MARQUIS.

I. Dor. No guardian hand, my Julia?

Julia. Oh, you know not

How well she lov'd me! (*Falling on the body.*)

Mar. Heavens, do I live?

Ferd. My lord, avert your eyes from that
dear ruin,

And fix them sternly here; 'twas I destroy'd
The fairest, loveliest of the works of heaven.
Where are your tortures? rouse offended justice.
This but concludes a ling'ring cruelty,
Drawn out with dying pain thro' twenty years:
This wound was on the mind—another deed
Was done in distant time, yet unaton'd.

Prepare the dungeon, hopeless as my guilt,
Dark as the crimes it ne'er can expiate,
I will not fly a second time:

Des. Not you,

Alone, my father, I partook the crime,
And justly shall I share the punishment.

Mar. Monsters! avaunt! nor blast my aching
sight!

You breathe a pois'nous vapour all around,
That veils the splendor of the noon-day sun.
Yes! by that lifeless form, how lovely still!
And such a summons will collect at once
A damning evidence from all the world,
I call down vengeance on these deeds of hell.
Alas! can vengeance give us back the dead?

Can vengeance tinge that lip with its lost
ruby?

Ferd. My lord, be quick—summon the awful court,

Place ermin'd justice on its sacred seat,
Collect the world, but not for evidence,
Th' accus'd himself acknowledges the charge.
Don Ferdinand, tho' guilty, cannot lie.
There at the bar I'll justify her fame,
Till the applauding croud, with echoing voice,
Shall glory in her spotless purity,
And ere her soaring spirit gain its heav'n,
Haply the sound shall reach her radiant flight,
And one last earthly tear shall be forgiven.

L. Dor. My lord, suspend your judgment
but a moment,

And you shall hear in all their circumstance,
The sad events that mark'd this fatal hour.

Julia. (*Rising*) Oh! I am sick to death.

L. Dor. Rest, rest, on me :

Time's sweeping wing shall cast its ample shade
On all these horrors—then, my dearest love,
With milder sorrow shall you oft recount,
Your mother's excellence—and you will pardon,
Should I declare, such minds as yours may err,
Tho' still on virtue's side—tis the excess
Of noble sentiment, most dangerous then
When most alluring, and when most admir'd,
By calm impartial wisdom most condemn'd.
This my unhappy friend love as your brother :
He was the chosen partner of my youth,

Ere yet my bosom knew a brighter flame.
He too shall learn each object to pursue,
Tho' virtue's brightest torch illumes the path,
With ardor temper'd by the rules of prudence—
The rest is madness all, and oft converts
The feelings form'd to soothe, adorn, delight,
To desolating storms that sweep away,
Man's highest pleasures and his purest joys.

THE END.

EPILOGUE.

*To be spoken by the Actress who has performed
the character of Julia.*

TIMID and sad before you I appear,
And come to bless, not to dispel the tear,
Myself the victim of my mimic art,
And still the mourning daughter in my heart :
Still, still I weep—do you confirm the cheat,
And with your sighs prolong the dear deceit :
Yet for the daughter not alone I sue,
And more than grief is admiration due,
To the great cause which stung the mother's breast
And torturing sunk her in eternal rest :
Britons ! that cause, which mighty Rome ador'd,
Which gave her freedom and again restor'd !
For when Lucretia's wrongs were whelm'd in time,
And Appius shaded darker Tarquin's crime,
At last Virginia's shriek slaves rais'd the head,
The judge grew righteous and the tyrant fled :
Is then the matron's honor but a name,
Nor the shield sacred o'er the virgin's fame ?
Is there no bond of more than magic charm,
For spotless woman and the hero's arm ?
Shall we reject the sentiment and sense,
That valour ever bind to innocence ?
A common blessing does no power reveal
To those who bravely act and purely feel ?

Dissolve this tie and every hope you yield,
Wretches at home and cowards in the field.

Should you object, I am too young to teach,
'Tis by the author's orders thus I preach :
“ I use the poet's privilege,” he cried,
And thus he said, and thus he prophecy'd.
When not alone fair virtue's strength shall fail,
But vice undaunted throw aside the veil,
When so far shall proceed the black'ning pest,
That female honor shall be deem'd a jest,
When the false friends in highest circles move,
Who tore the blushing rose from wedded love,
When the wrong'd husband decorates his life
With spoils obtain'd through his dishonor'd wife,
When the affections to all pride shall die,
To all their ancient shew and gallantry,
Then, oh my country ! (be the omens far !)
Sunk is the glory of the western star,
Self-vanquish'd, self-debas'd, a pow'rless foe,
With mean submission you escape the blow,
Your golden harvests glad a foreign strand,
And shine as tribute through a hostile land.

THE
SCHOOL FOR FRIENDS.

A COMEDY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

BELFORD.	<i>A Rich Merchant.</i>
EDWARD BELFORD.	<i>His Son.</i>
O'NEALE.	<i>An Irish Gentleman.</i>
EVERARD.	<i>An English Gentleman.</i>
DELVILLE.	<i>Friend to Edward Belford.</i>
FLUSH.	
DR. AIMWELL.	<i>Literary Pretenders.</i>
LAMBERT.	
DUPONT.	<i>Valet to O'Neale.</i>
MRS. BELFORD.	<i>Wife of Belford.</i>
LOUISA	<i>Daughter of Belford.</i>
LADY LOVELL.	<i>A Widow.</i>
LAURA.	<i>Niece to Lady Lovell.</i>
BETTY.	<i>Waiting-woman to Laura</i>

Scene, Bath.

PROLOGUE,

*In a Dialogue supposed to be spoken between the
Author and an Actress.*

Act. I will not act in this your comedy.

Auth. You act for others—then why not for me?

Act. It will be damn'd—and hisses make me fear:

La! the dread catcall now assails my ear:

Take it away—*Auth.* Away? now I protest,

Good Mrs. Termagant, I've done my best.

Act. Your best? where's, where's the subterranean vault?

You have no ghost, and that's a bouncing fault:

You have no murder either—that's another:

Pray introduce a man that kills his brother:

Blow up a house—*Auth.* In comedy? *Act.* Why not?

The English people ever lov'd a plot:

Auth. I have a plot and regular enough:

Act. Without gunpowder? milk and water stuff!

Think you a comedy will now succeed,

If houses fall not, and no bosoms bleed?

Friend against friend, and father against son,

Explosions, screams—these give a play a run:

These interspers'd with farce enchant the age,

And ape and tiger sole possess the stage:

Such are the monsters people now delight in,

For ever grinning, or for ever fighting:

Then with the wonders charmingly perplexed,

In sweet delirium they cry out, “what next?”

'Till thus you write your poor attempts you'll rue :

Auth. (*To the audience*) Ye crowded critics, I appeal to you.

Is not this slander ? and the woman wrong ?

The writer's faults, she says, to you belong :

I put off horrors to another time :

Then you shall weep or shudder deep at crime :

A noble dame shall perish for a name,

And in the tomb escape e'en fancied shame,

The British matron shall support her cause,

A British audience shall pour down applause,

To that still list'ning with her final sigh,

True to her feeling she shall smile and die :

Or shall a prince dethron'd his rights regain,

And take full vengeance for a father slain :

Through ancient story shall the author range,

Nor mar the tragic scene with comic change,

Yet ere his pinions shall that region brave,

He hopes to poise them on your Shakespear's grave.

He places now a scene before your eyes,

Where lighter faults and lighter virtues rise ;

A varied tale of common wrong and right

Ending in happiness is your's to-night :

Should you applaud—ennobl'd is his pen :

Should you condemn—he mourns, but tries again :

In blaming you his time he will not waste,

Nor sink his own defects in your bad taste.

THE
SCHOOL FOR FRIENDS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Mr. Belford's House.*

EDWARD BELFORD, MRS. BELFORD,
LOUISA.

Mrs. Belford.

WHAT! will nothing induce you to stir out, son? I assure you, the concert last night was quite delightful; not, indeed, that I ever got beyond the first step of the staircase, but every body praised the singing as they came down, and I was in the most convenient place in the world for hearing the opinions of people—I protest this new singer—ah—her name is above me—is quite astonishing—you might have heard a pin drop even in the street from anxiety to

catch a single note. I see you have an invitation for to-night to Lady Macpherson's masquerade, where of course the only dominos will be of plaid, in honor of her ladyship's country—nothing can be more becoming—you'll go—you'll surely go.

E. Bel. Me? madam—What could induce me to come to this place—it's almost as unpleasant to refuse invitations as to accept them.

Louisa. Yes—pray—go, Edward, if it's only to oblige me—what am I to do without you?

E. Bel. Any thing else, my dearest Louisa—but rush again into the tumult of the world, I cannot—I am dazzled to blindness by its gaudy brilliancy, I am deafened by its noise—my soul and body partake of its uproar, and in the midst of so much irritation the passions only can act, for they only are equal to the exertion required from us.

Mrs. Bel. But consider your father—how anxious he is to see you make a figure in the fashionable world.

E. Bel. An honourable figure, I should hope—he would not have me mount the pillory in order to be famous.

Louisa. Dear Edward, be calm.

E. Bel. I cannot be calm on this subject.

Mrs. Bel. Indeed, son, you are wrong—quite wrong—all the world say, that in your affair with Delville, you was not much, if at all to blame.

E. Bel. If such is the general opinion, the general opinion is false—Delville is the best, the bravest, the most generous of mankind—the offence was on my side—the breach of friendship was mine—disclaimed, rejected by his oldest friend, by him, whom, I believe in my soul, he would have died to serve, he gave his affections a wider range, and chose the most obvious mode of benefiting his country by entering the army.

Louisa. Poor Delville!

Mrs. Bel. It's very well we see no more of him, with his empty pockets and his superabundance of honor.

E. Bel. Yes—Louisa—he was as warm a lover as he was a friend—as either how ill rewarded! Never, never, I have often sworn it, never will I appear in the world again without the sacred advantage I enjoyed when first I entered it—arm in arm with Delville.

Mrs. Bel. Well, for my part, I never understood him, but indeed he never condescended to make himself very intelligible.

Louisa. Surely you will not number pride amongst his faults.

Mrs. Bel. I am glad you confess he had faults—in my mind, Edward, the gentlemen you live with now, are much better spoken, and know twice as much—There is some pleasure in listening to Dr. Aimwell—he knows all the past, and something of the future too I promise you.

Louisa. The future, mother?

Mrs. Bel. Let that pass, child—more of that by-and-by—I was speaking of Mr. Delville.—Good heavens! what noise was that! how like the sound of the raven beating against my window the morning poor Tabitha died—I wish Dr. Aimwell was here, or Mr. Lambert.

Louisa. It's nothing but the rattling of the window from the violence of the wind.

Mrs. Bel. Oh no—nothing else—nothing in the world else—these children of mine think themselves vastly wise—nothing else to be sure—well—as I was saying, Mr. Delville was a man I never much liked, because I never understood him—I never heard of him having more than one friend and that was you, Edward—It's very well you are rid of him—What do you start for?—you know he soon recovered from his wound, and if it had not been so!—But come, Louisa, we must go and get our dresses ready for the masquerade—I hope there will be no witches there to-night—I don't think I can stand a witch—Come with me Louisa—I don't know how it is—I am dreadfully nervous to-day.

Exit.

E. Bel. Louisa, one word with you—This is a gay place, and you are one of the first amongst the gay—your better government of a milder nature may save you from errors similar to mine—yet sometimes I flatter myself we re-

semble each other in some respects—you fix, I would say, you give your affections rapidly and in your anxiety to please, your exertions for this end are sometimes ill-bestowed.

Mrs. Bel. (Returning) Bless me—Louisa—where is the child? I am quite ill with calling you—but all is wrong to-day.

E. Bel. Well—sister—remember my poor friend—he may return from the east, abounding in wealth—if so, he will be a great prize for every one—he may return, as he went out, in poverty—still, still,

Louisa. He will be a prize for your sister—thank you, sir—*Exit.*

E. Bel. Sister! you at least I may love without danger—I may hang over your virtues without growing giddy with the contemplation.

Enter SERVANT.

Ser. Mr. Flush, Dr. Aimwell, and Mr. Lambert are below, sir.

E. Bel. So—so—they are arrived—I am glad of it—I'll wait upon them—(*Exit Servant.*) Indeed I have much to say to them on various subjects.*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*An Apartment at Mr. BELFORD's.*

Mr. BELFORD *alone.*

Bel. I protest I can think of nothing else—this scheme of his defeats my whole plan—I have been toiling hard all my life, with painful laborious industry, adding guinea to guinea, hundred to hundred, and thousand to thousand, with timid steps as my means supplied me, proceeding from necessaries to conveniences, and from conveniences to luxuries, from lodging to lodging, from house to house, each upon a regular scale of scanty superiority, and finally from town to the country—my villa now surpasses that of any ancient land-holder in the county, and just when my object seems attained, when I am about to call myself the founder of a family; when I am searching the herald's office for an escutcheon, my son, on whose talents and education I have to depend to give the last finish to my labours, declines all the known paths of ambition, flies from a world he has scarcely seen, and dignifies his indolence with I don't know what fine names—hang his philosophy! I can't endure the sound.

Enter EVERARD and O'NEALE.

O'Neale. What! the old gentleman? your most obedient Mr. Belford—welcome to Bath,

sir—Everard and I are but just arrived, and take the first opportunity of paying our respects.

Ever. The ladies, I hope, are well.

Bel. Perfectly well, sir, I thank you—always happy in the honor of Mr. Everard's company.

O'Neale. And your son, sir.

Bel. He is mad sir—You'll excuse me, gentlemen, I must beg pardon for being so abrupt.

O'Neale. Mad! what do you mean?

Bel. Fit for nothing but to scrawl incoherent rhapsodies on the walls of a cell in Bedlam—Indeed I'm not sure they would admit him there—they would hiss him out of company, he is so outrageously unreasonable.

Ever. You surely are not serious.

O'Neale. Serious? no, no.

Bel. I assure you I am serious—I wish I were only in jest—This passion of mine will make me forget my manners, but I can't help it.

O'Neale. This is a most strange misfortune—I saw him two months ago, and I observed no signs of insanity about him.

Ever. I never saw any man in more even spirits.

Bel. Ah! you caught him in a lucid interval—why, gentlemen, he is become a philosopher—upon my soul; I should not be in the least surprised if he turned author.

O'Neale. I understand you—his unfortunate duel with Delville, but this is nothing new—if.

he is mad now, he has been equally mad these six years.

Bel. The length of the fit is but a poor consolation, Mr. O'Neale.

O'Neale. I am afraid the only mode of cure is the return of Delville from the East-Indies, with no appearance of his wound remaining. But I hate melancholy as much as you hate a philosopher—indeed that blessed country of mine knows no poison of any sort. We'll try this son of yours. Everard has taken a house here, and it ought to be comfortable, for to my knowledge his employment for the last month has been to write letters to his upholsterer on the subject. An Irishman would rather have slept in the streets than have taken half the trouble.

Ever. However, I shall have the honor of your company sometimes, and we'll see what effect a small party with tolerable wine—I wish I may be able to find a passable cook here, but if not I'll send for my own—yes—perhaps a pleasant dinner of six or eight friends may work a reformation in our philosopher.

O'Neale. Pray, Everard, have you called upon Lady Lovell and her daughter.

Ever. I can scarcely forbear smiling at so unexpected a question—I protest the mere thought puts me in a fever.

O'Neale. Have you called upon them—my good fellow.

Ever. Called upon them? certainly not—I have not been half an hour in Bath.

O'Neale. Half an hour? your leaders touched my carriage all the way up the last hill, and since I have been here I have called upon Lady Lovell and her daughter—Mrs. Dashall in the Crescent—the widow Gadabout in the Circus—peeped into the club-room at the York Hotel—paid you a visit in Pultney-street, and dragged your lingering, statue-like steps to visit our friend Mr. Belford.

Bel. You do us infinite honor—I am sorry my wife and daughter are from home—my son no doubt will wait upon you instantly.

(*Speaks to a Servant.*)

Ever. You have been expeditious—this is the only visit I shall pay till the day after to-morrow—Whenever I come to a place I always spend the first day in seeing that all is comfortable at home—the doors free upon their hinges and the windows well closed—you would have a man treated better than his dog—clean straw, a kennel, and liberty to go in and out, I own, are not enough for me—then, as I said before, I am in some doubt concerning a cook—I found several recommendations on my table, but I have not yet had time to decide upon the merits of the respective claims—I fancy the best way will be to send for Dubardieu.

Bel. Really, Mr. Everard, considering the multiplicity and importance of your affairs, I

cannot express my obligation for the early honor you have done me.

Enter a SERVANT, who speaks to BELFORD.

O'Neale. (To Ever.) Well—I shall see the ladies in the evening, and I'll make your apologies.

Ever. You have no occasion to give yourself so much trouble.

Bel. (To Ser.) Not coming? engaged—this is intolerable—engaged with Dr. Aimwell and his gang—do you hear, gentlemen? I cannot keep my temper—tell him, sirrah, he shall come, tell him he is not engaged—tell him I insist upon his coming.

O'Neale. No, no—let him not trouble himself—if he won't come to us, we can wait upon him, and we shall have the double advantage of a little conversation with his new friends—I'll bet a thousand pounds I take him to Lady Macpherson's this evening, and as for his companions, if they are not formal pedants who bend under the weight of learning rather than wear it for an ornament, they will be glad to accompany us.

(Belford makes a sign of assent to the servant, who goes out.)

Enter DUPONT to O'NEALE.

O'Neale. Well—scoundrel—where now in such a hurry?

Dup. I am come to tell you, sir, there is no lodging to be got in all Bath.

O'Neale. No lodging? don't come to me with your cursed Swiss visage, drawn as long as a street ballad, and your whining voice as cracked and squeaking as the singer of it—if there is no lodging, I suppose we can find a garret at one of the inns—I can sleep anywhere.

Dup. Ma foi—as you please.

Exit.

Enter Servant, with a letter to EVERARD, who reads it.

Ever. This is very well—that alteration will do—let him take care that the list is nailed carefully upon the parlour door, and I wish you to see it done—one should really suppose men forgot what they are made of—Pray take care the wind is kept out there. *Exit Servant.*

O'Neale. Well—now for our friend, Belford—though by the bye, I may as well go and give that rascal of mine some directions upon the most likely place for finding a lodging—I should not like to sleep exactly in the streets—but don't go near Belford till I return—let me be present at the introduction.

Ever. Well—well—we'll wait for you—I protest you are worse than a country-race ball in the dog days.

O'Neale. I'll be back in an instant. *Exit.*
(*Everard and Belford retire to seats at the back of the stage, and the scene closes.*)

SCENE III.—EDWARD BELFORD'S *Apartment.*

EDWARD BELFORD, FLUSH, DR. AIMWELL,
LAMBERT.

Flush. Genius, sir, is like the air—it may fill immensity—but a wall of paper may confine it.

E. Bel. But it is then most admirable, when it soars unconscious of its elevation. Then do we inferior men pursue its flight with our applause, and if it falls, sir, we croud round it, to smooth its ruffled plumes, bind up its bruises, and prepare it for a still bolder effort.

Flush. You have read my tragedy, Mr. Belford.

E. Bel. You must allow me to speak impartially.

Flush. It was with that hope—I will say, it was under that express condition I brought it you—an impartial friend with such infinite taste is so great a treasure! at all events, there is no doubt I think of its success upon the stage.

E. Bel. So I should hope—for you have devoted yourself most zealously to the taste of the times—you appear not to have regarded the writing but the plot, which is indeed so intricate and involved, that all your poetic efforts are buried under the attention necessary to unravel your scheme.—All is surprize from beginning to end—your actors will be in one continual start—Then you depend too much upon deco-

rations—had your scenes been laid where splendor naturally attaches to them, you had been fortunate—but to force in unnecessary processions, to be perpetually changing from town to country, and from day to night, to confound your dialogue by your multiplicity of scenes and speakers, is false and wrong in itself, and a miserable subservience to a vitiated age. I own, though I do not implicitly admire the French tragedy—

Flush. The French tragedy? I am not surprised you should disapprove of mine—if ever I wrote a tragedy to be compared with one of Racine's, I should deem it the greatest disgrace that could befall me.

E. Bel. Indeed? and yet you would avoid being unintelligibly bombastic or disgustingly familiar—though you would not raise the storm of the passions, you would agitate them by a gentle swell, gradually rising with the development of the plot, and continuing till the fall of the curtain. Is not this, think you, as much as we in this latter age should aspire to.

Flush. I appeal to the people—*(Aside)* Give me a house filled with critics that nature made.

Aim. *(Aside to Lamb.)* When he has given Mr. Flush his opinion upon his tragedy—which, between you and me, is a vile production—out of all rule—sometimes in the clouds, and sometimes creeping.

E. Bel. (*to Aim.*) I have read your work,
Dr. Aimwell.

Aim. And may I ask your opinion? I have nothing of the sensibility of an author about me—trust me, sir—I am no poet—not I, a few rhymes occasionally for the women—only speak out, sir, its the greatest favor you can do me.

E. Bel. You are not offended, Mr. Flush.

Flush. I shall never be able to repay my obligations to you.—(*Aside*) the people, the people shall be my judges—none of your closet critics for me.

Aim. Pray, sir, let me hear your opinion—and let me only beg of you not to flatter me.

E. Bel. To say the truth, sir, I do not like a desultory book—when I see a subject stated in a title page, I expect to find that subject discussed by itself, without the introduction of unnecessary matter.

Aim. But surely, sir, no important matter can be deemed unnecessary whenever and wherever introduced.

E. Bel. I speak only from my own feelings—I like reading to a point—according to your system there is no work you might not swell to any extent—like the learned Italian father, who being employed by the Neapolitan court to write upon the subject of Herculaneum, produced two folios by way of preface.

Aim. An idle, superficial young man this, after all.

E. Bel. You have written a great work—a little of every thing, and something of the person whose name appears in your title page—there is a kind of literary hypocrisy in such works as these—under the sanction of a great name, you bring before the public much that has no connexion with it—this manufacture of books is tedious, and when sheltered by a venerable authority like that you have chosen, I am not sure it does not shock our feelings as a kind of fraud upon the illustrious dead—But I must entreat you pardon me.

Aim. My dear sir—the booksellers in Paternoster-row don't agree with this flimsy well-bred criticism.—(*Aside*) My dear most excellent friend, how much I am indebted to you.

E. Bel. Your history, Mr. Lambert, seems to me to have something of the same fault as Dr. Aimwell's biography—I would not have a mere dull detail of facts, but then you should seldom indulge in dissertation, and even your observations should be short—your characters are drawn too hastily—your work is neither history, biography, nor a collection of essays, but it has some of the characteristics of each of these works—the weight of legitimate history, I suspect, would have reduced your work from ten to five volumes.

Enter BELFORD, EVERARD, O'NEALE.

Bel. As I suspected, as I suspected—the very

set—your would-be authors, for they deserve not the name—Edward, here are your old friends, the honorable Mr. Everard,

E. Bel. Everard, your most obedient—
O'Neale—

O'Neale. Death—man—you welcome us with a smile that is like a blossom in March, afraid of peeping out, lest it should be nipt by the frost. I did not keep you long, Mr. Belford, I hope—the truth is, just as I was turning the corner of the street, who should I meet but my old friend Ranger—he made me step into the milliner's shop opposite your window, Belford, where we found old Lady Pentweasle, who must be in her seventieth year at least, choosing a head-dress that was made for sixteen, and trying to put on a simper that might become it, and as if all things were reversed, there was her relation, Miss Lovell, shrouding her youthful beauty in a veil that should have covered only wrinkles and ill-humour—but bless me—here are three gentlemen I did not see.

Lamb. (*to Aim.*) Will you stay to be pestered by this fellow.

Aim. He gives no dinners—and as for his life, it won't furnish materials for a duodecimo.

Aside.

Flush. “ His soul proud science never taught to stray.” *Aside.*

E. Bel. I shall see you at dinner, gentlemen,

and then we'll talk over these matters at our ease.

Aim. (*going out*) I only hope this fine young man may not be spoilt by such empty coxcombs. *Exeunt Aim. Lamb. Flush.*

O'Neale. Well-bred men—admirable manners.

Ever. And these you choose to prefer to your old friend—flattering indeed !

E. Bel. Surely, gentlemen, you might find a better subject for ridicule than literary merit.

Ever. Is the merit real? for if they are but pretenders, and upon their hollow and unsound profession of knowledge and talents, assume the privilege of rudeness to all around them, they are despicable in exact proportion to the magnificence of their claims.

Bel. Right, Mr. Everard, right.

O'Neale. They must be intolerable indeed, to have struck such a spark of anger from you, Everard—But, Belford!—what is the fellow looking at?—what now? has Apelles hung a picture on the opposite wall—on my soul, man, you will disjoint your neck—the milliner's shop, is it—Mr. Philosopher, your most obedient—a woman is the chief good after all, most laborious student, most retired sage, most self-centered meditator.

E. Bel. I was not thinking of a woman, much less looking at one—though indeed, if the original uncreated form, the ideal model of

loveliness appears to us mortals, it is most assuredly in woman.

Bel. There—did you hear him, gentlemen, did you hear him?—a downright author—now is he not mad? and he thinks not of woman—I wish I had never thought of woman, and I should not have had a disobedient son to defeat the prospects of a long life—Gentlemen, I'll leave you to see what you can make of him—perhaps, as the spirit of opposition declines on the departure of his father, he may recover something of his original character—death—I have no patience.

Exit.

Ever. Belford, you heard your father's hopes.

O'Neale. For heaven's sake, my dear fellow, come to the masquerade to-night—particularly as it is to end in a ball.

Ever. In a day or two I shall be able to see my friends—and then I shall have the honour of your company.

O'Neale. Just one dance.

Ever. We shall have no more quarrels.

E. Bel. Heaven grant it!

O'Neale. Lady Lovell and her niece will be there.

E. Bel. What—they are in Bath?

O'Neale. In Bath? so when you sent out such a glance to the milliner's shop just now, it brought back no answer to that question—most learned sir.

E. Bel. I saw them but for a month—her

ladyship knows how to make her faults graceful, and as for her niece, whatever is fair and lovely, in nature, seemed just so much ornamented by fashion as to be set off to most advantage.

Ever. Now if the old gentleman could have heard that piece of eloquence—it's almost lost upon us !

O'Neale. So—so—I find I have a rival—with all my heart—certainly you'll come to the ball—you won't be positively compelled to dance, and if you find a country dance too intricate for you, what think you of getting two of these ideal models to join with you in the sweeping grace of the reel—or you may choose the self-dependent solitary merriment of the horn-pipe, or the unsophisticated clatter of the Irish jig.

E. Bel. This is well—perfectly well—and these are friends ! *(half aside.)*

O'Neale. There you will be figuring in Athenian or Roman steps—bringing back the simplicity of ancient times—shewing us how Pericles used to dance away his gravity with his Aspasia. Ah ! I am sadly afraid that old Grecian was not a jot better than the statesmen of our own day.

E. Bel. *(Throwing himself in a chair)* Heaven and earth !

Ever. What is the matter, Belford—O'Neale, I am sure, will beg the Grecian lady's pardon.

E. Bel. You vex me beyond all patience—

you know I have no spirits, that I ought to have no spirits for the world's gaiety—and yet you, my old friends, the common friends of him, who for me has suffered so much and for whom I ought to suffer in my turn, make yourselves the panders to my father's unreasonable ambition, and would tear out my heart for the inspection and experimental cruelty of an unfeeling world—away, away, away.

O'Neale. We'll take you at your word—and, indeed, I may be better employed, for I have to make my peace with this female paragon for an inattention, which, I am afraid, excellent as she is, she has not forgiven—so farewell. *Exit.*

Ever. And as I seem to have no chance of seeing his sister, and don't find myself quite at home in these tempests, I may as well take my departure also—Good morning to you—Bel-ford. *Exit.*

E. Bel. Thank heaven—they are gone—Oh what a holy calm is there in solitude, when man sinks into himself amid the silence of the passions, or, should he wander forth, has philosophy for his companion and guide, and explores, thus emboldened, whatever there is in air, earth, or sea, for treasures that may benefit his kind. *Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment at LADY LOVELL's.*

Enter LADY LOVELL—LAURA.

Lady Lovell.

MARRIAGE? no—not for me—since poor Sir Thomas's death I have never thought of a second husband without horror—He was my earliest love, dear man. Never shall the widow's blush tingle on my cheek; never, to use the language of Mr. Flush, shall Hymen relume his torch for me.

Laura. Hold it in the air, my dear aunt, particularly if the wind should be westerly, and depend upon it it will blaze.

L. Lov. Mr. O'Neale is a handsome agreeable fellow I confess.

Laura. You are very quick of apprehension. I mentioned no names. Besides, he is in disgrace at present—he hardly chose to acknowledge me this morning, so you cannot suspect me of pleading his cause.

L. Lov. The wretch has a most light, inconsistent, inattentive manner—but why should I think of him. My affections were buried with my husband—poor dear man—his words, his looks, his manner, are continually before me. The masquerade we are going to this evening puts me in mind of the charming sedateness with which he once acted Queen Elizabeth, whilst I was the Queen of Scots—the thought brings tears into my eyes.

Enter O'NEALE.

O'Neale. Her ladyship and her niece—now to be prodigiously penitent. (*Aside*) Surely Lady Lovell can have no cause for serious distress.

Laura. Will you give Mr. O'Neale some account of your tears.

L. Lov. They are but momentary—an April shower, sir.

O'Neale. From a serene and laughing sky—an Irish shower, say—we have no tears there but those of the morning.

L. Lov. You have succeeded in banishing mine.

O'Neale. In good truth this is the very identical purpose for which I consider myself as sent over here—I did not come to make speeches in parliament, nor to improve the English constitution—for my part I leave my political feelings

on the other side the water—but this is certain, if the union is good for any thing, a tear in the eye of an English lady must be an infringement of one of its first articles.

Laura. My company seems entirely unnecessary here, and by taking my departure I may perhaps escape the mortification of neglect.

Exit.

L. Lov. We had a most brilliant party at Mrs. Knightley's last night. I was punished indeed for my want of taste in not attending to the music, for I left the whist table in debt a hundred pounds to my old enemy, lady Devereux. But it could not be helped—she minded nothing but the game.

O'Neale. While you suffered this Italian wonder to divide your attention—Miss Lovell, was you—bless me, I was not aware Miss Lovell had left us—(*Aside*) worse and worse—that unfortunate tear has undone me.

L. Lov. You seem absent, Mr. O'Neale—I hope no distress weighs upon your spirits.

O'Neale. You lost a hundred pounds, did you say. I have been more fortunate, for half an hour ago I received two hundred that I never expected to see. Up came my little debtor with an air of sang-froid, as if all obligations had been discharged between us. What a thing it is to be in the right, to have the eye of a man! One glance was sufficient. The bank notes flew up with his conscience. And,

indeed, I shall be peculiarly fortunate if you will suffer me to be your banker. A debt of honor should discharge a debt of honor in a lady's service.

L. Lov. I confess you will do me a favor—Lady Devereux and I are not upon the best terms, and it would be extremely unpleasant to me to be long obliged to her.

O'Neale. You are very condescending—

Gives the notes.

L. Lov. Heigho! are you going to the masquerade to-night?

O'Neale. Certainly—all the world will be there. I shall find you out, depend upon it.

L. Lov. I shall puzzle you.

O'Neale. No—the ladies generally choose the characters most opposite to their own, so I shall look for you amongst the envious old maids—

Enter MISS LOVELL and FLUSH.

And for Miss Lovell amongst the country Hoydens.

Laura. Upon my word, Mr. O'Neale, however rude your manner may be, I did not expect a rebuke in words.

O'Neale. I assure you if you had but heard—was ever any thing so unfortunate—you do not know—

Laura. Don't give yourself the trouble of apologizing—Mr. Flush, pray let me hear those

verses again, though I can hardly forgive you for immortalizing my foibles.

Flush. You cannot think the bagatelle worth repeating.

Laura. Flattery is generally agreeable—particularly in certain circumstances.

Looking at O'Neale.

O'Neale. Do allow me to explain.

Laura. Pray let us hear Mr. Flush.

Flush. You do me infinite honor, hem ! to say the truth they are not my worst—now then —will you hear, sir—

O'Neale. With pleasure, whatever is agreeable to Miss Lovell, though I am no great judge of poetry.

Laura. Extremely polite on a sudden !

Flush. I fancy the gentleman is jealous—to be sure we poets have winning ways with us.

Aside, adjusting his cravat.

O'Neale. Damn the fellow—why don't he begin.

L. Lov. Have mercy, my dear sir, on an unfortunate poet, who lives but upon our smiles.

O'Neale. Pardon me—pray, pardon me—alas ! this infirmity of a too hasty temper—pardon me, Mr. Flush—Lady Lovell—

Laura. Really a most unprovoked attack.

O'Neale. Ruined on all sides, I vow !

Aside.

L. Lov. Come, Mr. Flush, let us hear your verses.

Flush. Quite extempore I assure your ladyship—I struck them off on seeing this lady cast her beautiful eyes on a looking glass, as she sat down to read—it was an incident that fell into verse of itself.

O'Neale. Infernal ideot.

Aside.

Flush. Now then you shall hear—

“ Still, Laura, gaze—ah, why explore
 The poet’s vision, or the sage’s lore ?
 They can but paint those charms that melt,
 Or teach the virtue thou hast often felt.
 Well, if it must be, read—from books I flee,
 I’ll be content, my fair, to look on thee !
 Till grey-beards tell me where the book is found,
 So beautiful within—so exquisitely bound !”

O'Neale. I shall knock this fellow down, if I stay a moment longer—I shall see you in the evening at the masquerade. *Bows and Exit.*

L. Lov. Was ever any thing so abrupt—(*to Flush*) we are really much obliged to you.

Flush. They will be published in the next Gentleman’s Magazine, I imagine. Perhaps you would wish to have your name prefixed to them.

Laura. For heaven’s sake, no—indeed they would lose half their merit in my eyes by being published, for I should suspect they were written to please the world as well as myself.

Flush. They are much too good to be lost

notwithstanding. (*Aside*) You'll excuse me, ladies, for hinting such a thing, and all I beg of you is this—if they should creep without my knowledge and against my wishes, if through some too officious friend they should creep into notice, only do not imagine that it was I who gave them to the public. *Exit.*

Laura. Thou art a vain ridiculous coxcomb, and hast but one merit in thy whole character—that is, to have Mr. Edward Belford for thy friend—well—aunt—are your resolutions against a second husband stronger than they were, and has the momentary exhibition of a hasty temper, or rather a careless disposition, sunk our Irish friend in your opinion.

L. Lov. He is an agreeable, open-hearted, generous creature, and if I had not formed an unalterable resolution never again to bind myself with marriage ties, to this temptation only perhaps I might have submitted. But let us talk of something else—I find your adorer, Mr. Edward Belford, is in Bath.

Laura. No adorer of mine—he has altogether disowned the worship. Just indeed as his prayers seemed bursting from his lips, he started up in a terrible alarm, and neither I nor the world have heard of him since. His sister, however, whom I like almost as well as her brother, has explained to me in her letters his love of solitude, and flatters me with telling me how near I was to break his ridiculous determination. In

the mean time, as you mention your objections to a second marriage in all companies, I have the credit of having won the heart of Mr. O'Neale, though certainly never were hostilities so openly carried on as between us.

L. Lov. I hope I shall find him out at the masquerade—apropos, Laura—while we are talking here, we forget our promise to rehearse our parts with Louisa Belford this morning.

Laura. True—true—

Exeunt.

SCENE II.—*An Apartment at Mr. BELFORD'S.*

E. BELFORD—LOUISA.

E. Bel. You know my opinion, Louisa—I would not preach to you the doctrine of a romantic affection, which, being never answered by the world, must be the source of perpetual torment to you; yet this I must say, that if to marry from love only is imprudent, to marry but for the sake of rank or fortune is criminal. The first may be the excess of a virtue, the last can be nothing but mean. Then my wishes upon the subject of Delville you know are unchangeable.

Louisa. Pray, brother, don't you think you resemble those pastors who inculcate the practice of virtue without setting us the example of

it? Do you mean to do us the two-fold service of advising us by your words and warning us by your life? Why don't you call this affection into exertion for your own happiness?

E. Bel. No—no—I tremble at the thought of fetters, which it is impossible to break, and yet—

Louisa. Which you are too proud to submit to wear—oh! that I were any thing but your sister.

E. Bel. I should never go near you—the lady that most resembles you I knew but a short month, and I felt how necessary it was to fly from charms that maddened half the world, and which were hurrying me on a career, in which, like many others, I should have made myself infinitely ridiculous. Happy was it for me that my mind had been chastened and strengthened by affliction to enable me so to fly. Delville ever served me, and he did me this service even by our quarrel: Oh! I could almost wish the catholic religion was established, that we might build numeries for you.

Louisa. You are not to be borne—I wish the catholic religion was restored; you should be forced into the church, that you might be a bachelor for life.

E. Bel. Would you choose your brother, as you do now, for your confessor? well—I have given you my opinion—but depend upon it, you will have time enough to make up your

mind. Everard will conduct his approaches to you according to the rules of strict decorum. Ladders of ropes and hair-breadth escapes were for the last age.

Enter BELFORD.

Bel. Well—Edward—if you can be reasonable for a moment, I should wish to have a little conversation with you upon Mr. Everard's evident intentions with regard to your sister.

E. Bel. He surely has made no proposals before he has completed his domestic arrangements.

Bel. No—not absolutely—but that he intends it in a short time is, I think, most certain.

E. Bel. Yes—and I will venture to prophecy his manner—he will inquire into the exact amount of my sister's fortune—probably request you to add ten thousand pounds more to what you mean to give her already—he will tell you honorably and fairly the state of his own affairs, which I am told are rather embarrassed—in the course of his conversation he will hint at the antiquity of his family and talk of the pleasure of being allied to your's in order that you may descant upon the honor of being connected with his—if all things should be satisfactory to him, he will beg leave to pay his addresses to my sister, and then commence his suit in form.

Bel. Well—I see no harm in this—I cannot for the life and soul of me see any harm in this. Mr. Everard is one of the oldest families in the kingdom. He wants money to restore his family inheritance to it's splendor—we want rank to give brilliancy to our riches—the bargain's very well, I think.

E. Bel. Yes—it would pass upon the exchange, sir.

Bel. Don't sneer, Edward—don't sneer at your father—that at all events cannot be becoming—'sdeath, is it not enough to drive me mad to have all my schemes defeated, at the very moment when they seemed to touch their completion—to be wrecked just in the haven—and all this for a mere whim, a shadowy caprice, an unintelligible phantom.

E. Bel. You mistake this matter, sir—depend upon it—if I thought that by making the efforts you require from me I should forward your plans, I would do my best to resist a most imperious feeling, and rush at once into the world: but be assured I should not only fail, but I should counteract your wishes: I should make more enemies than friends: we are placed in an inviolous situation, which, politically speaking, the constitution disowns, and to which the passions of those, amongst whom you wish to live, are strongly opposed: it is better, sir, trust me, it is better to win than to force our way.

Bel. Opposed? to win than to force our way?

I am ashamed of your want of spirit. And pray, sir, why are we in an invidious situation, and why should successful industry be afraid to lift up its head in any society?

E. Bel. Sir—we must take the world as it is—as it has been since our great forefathers bequeathed the rich inheritance of liberty to their posterity. But if you ask my opinion seriously on this subject, I must confess I in great measure agree with the common sentiment, however it may be against myself. Generally speaking, it is surely painful to reflect how often the independent possessor of an estate too small for pride, but large enough a few years back to supply him with all the conveniences, and many of the luxuries of life, and to enable him to educate his children with similar prospects, placed in that station the most favorable that can be conceived to all the amiable virtues, with little to enflame his passions, and much to animate his affections, who has lived, perhaps after the example of a long line of ancestors, the protector of his neighbourhood, the regulator of their wants, the reconciler of their differences, the Hampden of their politics; it is, sir, surely painful to reflect, that this man, after having relinquished by degrees, every luxury to which he has been accustomed, having converted his pleasure-ground, long the elegant and salutary resort of his family and friends, to the purposes of agriculture, having felled every tree that his

imagination had taught him to consider as the chief ornament of his estate, and the memorial of his fathers, having diminished his household, dismissed his dependants, consulted economy even in the education of his children—that still, after all his sacrifices, he should be compelled to resign this hereditary seat, this cherished abode of the virtues, to some opulent bidder, who probably contents himself with the reputation of being a landed proprietor ; and never visits the country but to set an example of indolence and voluptuousness at the Easter or Christmas festivals.

Bel. Mark me, Louisa, mark me. You shall marry, you shall marry Mr. Everard—on your filial obedience you shall marry Mr. Everard—your fortune shall be a hundred thousand pounds instead of fifty, and that, sir, is the reward of your sermon. *Exit.*

Louisa. Alas, and alas ! how unfortunate, that two men, connected by the most solemn ties, living in the same house, and loving the same objects, should thus tear each other in pieces—

E. Bel. But to convince the world how insufficient riches are for happiness. Come—let us choose a pleasanter subject. In my library I've a picture of a great favorite of yours—it's long since you have seen it—come with me. *Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*North Parade.*

O'NEALE—DUPONT.

O'Neale. Do this, you dog you—and I'll never call you rascal again—I shall quarrel with one lady so outrageously, that I shall lose both of them—(*Aside*) I know you can talk when occasion calls for it.

Dup. Or I have lived a great while with my honored master to very little purpose.

O'Neale. There is no way so sure of persuading a lady as through the mouth of her maid.—Betty, when she adjusts a curl becomingly, throws in a word on the favorite theme; and the smile occasioned by a new charm, is directly transferred to the eloquence of the performer.

Dup. Well—sir—if you'll keep out of the way yourself I will see what I can do for you—but you remember how many fine schemes you have spoilt, and of your own planning.

O'Neale. You most impudent varlet—but upon my life here comes the very person on whom you are to try your skill.

Dup. Then for heaven's sake, sir, leave us.

O'Neale. Now no blunders, rogue. *Exit.*

Enter BETTY.

Betty. I protest here's the vile fellow's valet,

and I'll be sworn he is as bad as his master—I'll not speak to him. *(singing and passing.)*

Dup. *(bowing, and placing himself before her.)* Miss Elizabeth—do my eyes deceive me? it can be nobody else—Miss Elizabeth!

Betty. *(talking to herself.)* I protest I shan't be able to get to Mr. Chignon's the perfumer, before my mistress wants me, the streets are so crowded.

Dup. How charming!

Betty. He had but five bottles of the esprit de rose, and if I am not there soon they'll all be sold, for I heard Mrs. Tiffany declare her mistress would give any money for them. But there is no passing. *(As she attempts to pass, Dupont places himself before her.)* Was there ever seen such a croud?

Dup. *(lifting up his hands.)* How beautiful!

Betty. Then she is to be at the masquerade this evening, and to have her hair in some fandanglement that Mr. Chignon only can do. *(Attempting to pass.)*

Dup. How lovely!

Betty. I believe indeed I could dress her hair just as well as Mr. Chignon.

Dup. How bewitching.

Betty. But she is determined to have Mr. Chignon.

Dup. Have who? I must talk her over, or this Mr. Chignon will out-do my poor master—how angelic!

Betty. What's angelic, fellow?

Dup. You have not looked into your glass this morning—bless me! what a delicate tint the morning air gives the complexion!

Betty. The esprit de rose will be all gone.

Dup. And the flush mounting to the eyes gives them such extraordinary brilliancy.

Betty. I shall never be in time to get to Mr. Chignon.

Dup. How like a diamond in a bed of roses!

Betty. Lord—Mr. Dupont, are you here?—the croud is vastly inconvenient, isn't it?

Dup. I was perfectly in despair—I thought you had forgot the very humblest of your servants—and how is your mistress? my master, poor gentleman, is quite pale with thinking of nobody else, and nothing else.

Betty. Your master pale? it's the gnawing of his conscience then, I'll be sworn.

Dup. Conscience? conscience?

Betty. What does the fellow laugh at? your master is little better than a weathercock—I have found him out—I heard of him paying his compliments to Lady Lovell and neglecting my mistress—but we have found him out—and if my mistress knew her own dignity, she would think it as much beneath her to have any conversation with him, as I do to talk with his valet-de-chambre—so good morning to you.

Dup. (*Taking out his handkerchief.*) You have taught me I am sure where *my* conscience is.

Betty. I must not break the poor fellow's heart neither ! these men are always in extremes—either laughing or crying—I must not break his heart—a stranger in the country ! come, dry your eyes, man—put on one of your smiles—there, look pleased—come—that's very well—now answer me—is not your master a great rogue ?

Dup. My master a great rogue ?

Betty. Is'nt he a scoundrel ?

Dup. (*Shrugging up his shoulders*) *Comme ça.*

Betty. Did I not see him with these very eyes stand before my mistress's aunt, as if he was statue struck—and did'nt I hear him talk to her as if——did'nt I hear him make downright love to her ?

Dup. Your eyes were magnifying glasses—it is always so with the women in my country, I assure you, on these subjects.

Betty. And I suppose my ears had trumpets dangling to them, Mr. Saucebox—but this I know, if a lover of mine had said but half as much to any other woman, I'd have burnt his tongue out.

Dup. You don't know my master ?

Betty. I begin to find him out.

Dup. You don't know how warmly he loves !

Betty. And saying fine things to his mistress's aunt is a proof of it, I warrant you.

Dup. And he has said fine things to you many a time I'll answer for it.

Betty. I can't deny it.

Dup. Ah! yes—it's too true—I could almost stab him in pure jealousy—but its his way—he cannot help it—he loves your young mistress so warmly that a little of his affection will overflow in spite of himself, upon all who live in the same house with her.

Betty. I thank you, sir.

Dup. You would have the truth—I am sorry for it—I cannot bear the thought of offending you—but it must be spoken—you have forced it from me—there it is—I am sorry for it—it is a bad business—but his love is so violent—only don't tell your young mistress—you'll quite alarm her.

Betty. Is the man serious?

Dup. Pray, don't tell your mistress—what must the stream itself be when the mere spray is so overcoming.

Betty. Well—I protest—

Dup. Between you and me—as far as the aunt is concerned—as unconnected with Miss Lovell—but this you will keep to yourself—for indeed you are the only person in the house he has the least regard for except your mistress—as for the aunt—my poor master—I am telling all his secrets! as for the aunt!

O'Neale. (Behind) Let me see how my fellow is proceeding in his occupation.

Dup. As for the aunt!

Betty. Come—come—speak out.

Dup. You'll not be angry?

Betty. I am dying to hear.

Dup. But you'll be angry?

Betty. Be a man.

Dup. He can't endure her.

Betty. Indeed?

Dup. He detests her.

O'Neale. This is speaking out with a vengeance.

Dup. He swears at her in his sleep—and when I first go to him in the morning, in the midst of a yawn, which makes it almost impossible to understand him, he cries out—Dupont, says he—these are the first words he speaks—Dupont, is not lady Lovell an ugly old devil? isn't it ridiculous, Dupont, to see her so anxious to shew her ankle as she walks—and hear her lisp out soft phrases, that only become the age of seventeen—sweet slippery sentences that should slide only through the lips of her lovely niece.

O'Neale. What's the rascal at now?

Dup. I declare, Dupont, says he, shaking himself till he is wide awake from the violence of his dislike—for the old beldam to imagine that love should still watch on her withered cheek, or play in the windings of her grey hair, or fan her shrivelled bosom with his wings—

O'Neale. I can bear this no longer—Why—you most stupendous scoundrel—you vile

goatherd—you infamous mountaineer—how dare you, while you are in my service, slander a lady in this way? how dare you, you inhabitant of the snows, throw your cold calumnies against a lady, to whose natural charms, perfect as they are, forty years have but added the mild lustre of discretion!

Betty. So this is your accidental affection, is it? the mere froth, the spray of his love for my mistress, is it? I can't help admiring the gentleman's spirit too—I dare swear he would say the same of me if I was abused—my mistress shall hear of this, she shall, she shall, that she shall.

Dup. As you please, sir—if I stay in his service another hour—

O'Neale. Don't you know I'm descended from a royal stock? and arn't you sure, fellow, that since my great ancestor Shan-O'Neale, held his independent throne in the province of Ulster, not one of the O'Neales, through a genealogy of eight hundred years, ever heard a woman calumniated without drawing his sword in her defence? Honor is the characteristic of my nation, and, if it was banished from all the world, still would it give a deeper crimson to the blood-royal of the O'Neales.

Betty. Of the two the man is better than his master—when I talked about conscience he was sincere enough to laugh at it—but the master's honor! indeed I always heard they were sad savages in that country.

O'Neale. What ! that we eat men and women ?

Betty. No—but young children—and on my conscience I believe it.

O'Neale. A mighty convenient appetite for the poor—at once satisfying their hunger, and relieving them from the distress of a family—But you shall remember this, you jade, that we never see a pretty pouting lip without printing a kiss upon it. (*Kisses her.*)

Betty. Ah—you are a precious pair. *Exit.*

Dup. Pray, sir, may I ask you a question ?

O'Neale. Oh, sir, a thousand !

Dup. Is this honor of the male or the female gender ?

O'Neale. I' faith—I never had much time to inquire—from its vigour and from its armour, I should guess it to be masculine, yet there is a delicate beauty about it, which should shew it to be female.

Dup. Well—sir—when next you form a scheme, in which you condescend to give me a part to act, be kind enough to decide upon the object you mean to pursue—just choose one of the four, the aunt, the niece, the maid—or your honor— *Exit.*

O'Neale. Upon my soul, the fellow is not quite an ideot—Saint Patrick assist me !

Exit.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment at Mr. BELFORD'S.*

MR. BELFORD—LOUISA.

Belford.

LET no man believe in promises—let no man trust to hope—let no man be pronounced happy or miserable till he dies. Here am I, envied by my equals, pursued by the fawning, grinning approbation of my inferiors, and yet am I as miserable a fellow as crawls upon the earth. What are talents? what is beauty? Pray, Louisa, will you tell me seriously what objections you have to Mr. Everard, if indeed you have any but my ardent wishes that you should accept him.

Louisa. Those, I assure you, are not amongst my objections. But, my dear sir, let him offer himself before you think it necessary to ask such a question.

Bel. How can he make proposals, when you take every opportunity of checking his advances. I am told you almost insulted him just now

when you met him at the door. Why—why won't you marry him ?

Louisa. Because, after every effort to satisfy you by my full consent, I cannot like him.

Bel. Nonsense—nonsense—that answer your brother taught you.

Louisa. My dear sir, I felt it's justice long before my brother enforced it. I do not pretend to any virtues above the rest of the world, and perhaps I ought to be ashamed of thinking, or rather feeling differently upon this subject from you. I do not condemn those who find rank and fortune, and the consideration of the world, sufficient for happiness, but, (whether it is taste or judgment I do not know) I am certain I should be most unhappy, and make my husband equally so, if I married any man to whom I could not give all my affection.

Bel. Purling streams, tufted cottages, moonlight walks, harmonious sonnets ! Louisa, you are your brother in petticoats. How long do you think this affection of yours would last, if you married a man, whom, in your brother's jargon, you could love ? I'll tell you—just one month ; and if after this short period you had no more substantial objects of regard, such as good connexions or riches, you would quarrel—this is the end of all romantic marriages. According to my plan you might be miserable, I grant, but then there would be some decorum in your misery—some state in your woes—some

magnificence at least in your unhappiness—according to your's, you would be both wretched and pitied—not only miserable yourself, but undone in the opinion of others. Which is best think you?

Louisa. But, my dear father, I don't see the necessity of the option. Affection does not always accompany poverty, nor is decorum the constant attendant upon rank. Is it quite impossible to find a man of good connexions and ample wealth, and at the same time to love him? surely not, and then your observations might be just, for if we are the cold and fickle creatures you would picture us, still might the pure and honorable affection, you will allow to begin the marriage state, be divided by what you call more substantial advantages, and yet so silently and imperceptibly, that the happily deceived mind would be as blest at the end, as the beginning of life.

Bel. Yes—but if the connexion should be extremely good, indeed, you might shorten the probation of the affections out of regard to it. Come, try my girl—the female mind is very pliant—let this happy transfer be made immediately—imagine you have been desperately attached to Mr. Everard for this year, and now fall in love with his rank.

Louisa. Indeed, sir, I cannot encourage Mr. Everard.

Bel. Was ever man so tortured by disobedient

children? and here comes my wife, who, strange to tell, for some whim, which to me is totally incomprehensible—(God help me, my brain is almost turned) sides with her children against their father.

Enter MRS. BELFORD.

Mrs. Bel. Ah my poor daughter! I see by your looks what has been the subject of your conversation. But really I cannot help saying, Mr. Belford, Louisa is right.

Bel. What in the devil's name can the woman mean? 'sdeath, madam, have you not a hundred times reproached me with having married you for your money only, and have we not been happy enough together?

Mrs. Bel. There are reasons why Mr. Everard can never be admitted into this family.

Bel. Reasons? yes—my daughter had her reasons too—Isn't his family the best in England?

Mrs. Bel. His family is undeniably good, I grant you.

Bel. Isn't he rich enough? His estate which he inherits from his mother, is somewhat encumbered perhaps, but so as to be easily restored by a little management, and part of our daughter's fortune. This too is independent of his father, who has a rent-roll of ten thousand a-year, of an estate which has been in the family these seven

hundred years—every shilling of which will come to Mr. Everard.

Mrs. Bel. Not quite clear I believe, Mr. Bel-ford, but however, so far the match is very desirable.

Bel. Is he not our neighbour in the country, and will not our relationship to him give us exactly that rank in life which is alone wanting to our riches?

Mrs. Bel. It would indeed be extremely convenient.

Bel. Is he not a fine, handsome, fashionable fellow, who furnishes a ready passport into the best society. I suppose if I had recommended an ugly little dog with one eye, or a hunch upon his back—yes—if he had stammered, or walked upon crutches, he would have been accepted without scruple.

Mrs. Bel. Mr. Everard is certainly the handsomest man in Bath.

Bel. Or rather if there had been some bandy-legged dwarf, as deformed in body as in mind, without a sixpence in the world on one side, and the very image of our Apollo on the other, I conclude you would both have inclined to deformity and vice, if I should have recommended good looks and virtue.

Mrs. Bel. Your wishes must at all times be the principal object of mine and your daughter's regard.

Bel. Then, madam, may I ask you, what ob-

jections you have to Mr. Everard? What objections, madam?

Mrs. Bel. They are of the most serious nature.

Bel. Let us hear them.

Mrs. Bel. They are perfectly irresistible.

Bel. Only let us hear them.

Mrs. Bel. Last night I dreamt of Mr. Everard—and coffins flew across the room, and as they passed, spectres peered from the opening lids, and one of them was poor Louisa herself.

Bel. Grant me patience—what will become of me? *Exit.*

Louisa. What can my mother mean? Edward is not aware of the mischief this Dr. Aimwell is doing, or he would not invite him to the house —my poor father will go distracted—would I could obey him!

Enter DR. AIMWELL.

Aim. I'm really alarmed—these violent tempers quite shatter my nerves. I hope, madam, there is no serious cause of Mr. Belford's anger.

Mrs. Bel. No—not in the least—Mr. Belford is a very good man, a most excellent man—but he never was remarkable for the sciences—indeed his education was vastly deficient.

Louisa. Now, what trash is he going to talk? *(Aside.)*

Aim. Aye—madam—as our great dramatist says, with equal beauty and truth, “there are more things in nature than are dreamt of in our philosophy”—and it may surely well be argued, that in sleep the soul no longer animating the body, which is dead, and yet being itself incapable of rest, does soar to a nearer inspection of those dread secrets, which, when hampered and manacled by this terrestrial frame, and employed to support corporeal exercises, it cannot aspire to.

Mrs. Bel. Nothing surely was ever more plain—is it possible that any one should refuse his assent to such obvious truths—Louisa, child, come and listen to what Dr. Aimwell has to say—it is more edifying than a sermon.

Louisa. Excuse me, dear mother, I entreat you. You know Lady Lovell and Laura promised to come and rehearse the parts they have chosen for the masquerade—I shall not be ready for them.

Mrs. Bel. Well—get you gone—your grovelling taste does indeed surprize me—but get you gone.

Aim. Pray let us not interrupt you, young lady,—if indeed a single observation of mine could obtain your approbation and your smiles, I should triumph more than in the discovery of a star, or the completion of a folio.

Louisa. I am sorry I cannot stay at present—

What can the man mean by his stupid compliments, which he takes every occasion to repeat?

Exit.

Aim. I was speaking of the stars, madam—can it be for a moment supposed, that, numerous and brilliant as they are, they were intended merely for ornament or light. The first idea is only worthy of a lady's toilette.

Mrs Bel. Very true, indeed—doctor.

Aim. And for the second, the many nights, when clouds entirely veil the stars, shew us how well we can do without them. It is plain then you see they must have some other purpose, which can be only that of an influence upon the lives of men.

Mrs. Bel. I confess you have frequently almost convinced me upon this subject. But they are at such an immense distance from us, that really I cannot bring my mind to suppose they can have much effect upon us.

Aim. That objection, I assure you, is quite unworthy your great penetration—Consider, madam, the effect of the human countenance—the eye of man, as far as it can be seen, can compose or ruffle the breast of man—a frown destroys, a smile cheers—and if a mere earthly visage is possessed of so much power, what must those eternal fires, which may be perhaps the eyes of angels and blessed spirits, jemming the heavens, be able to achieve.

Bel. This is quite satisfactory—there is no

resisting the force of truth—I hope, doctor, the first fine night you'll favor me with some practical lessons on the subject.

Aim. Now, madam, having interpreted your dream, without the possibility of an error, and having compared it with some observations, I have lately made upon your daughter's natal star, called by us her horoscope, I cannot enough commend your prudence for having put a stop to the match between her and Mr. Everard.

Mrs. Bel. I am most happy to guide my conduct by these celestial authorities, doctor Aimwell.

Aim. And I must also inform you, madam, that from all the observations I can make, you must not hastily conclude on any marriage for your daughter.

Mrs. Bel. Bless me, I hope, you don't mean to prohibit marriage altogether.

Aim. By no means—your daughter's high destiny it is to reward learning and partake of fame—therefore, madam, when the vulgar advantages of rank and fortune are presented to you, however recommended by connubial authority, you must nobly reject them.

Mrs. Bel. Is this written in the stars?

Aim. Most legibly. Wean then, madam, wean your daughter's mind from handsome dress, or courtly bows, social gaieties, and the accomplishments of the person, and fix it

steadily on those higher qualities of a husband, which will immortalize herself with him.

Mr. Bel. Ah—doctor, in our degenerate days young ladies will think of those ridiculous gewgaws—but I will impress on my daughter the decrees of the heavenly bodies—in the mean time you will rejoice to hear she is as averse as I can wish to marrying Mr. Everard—that indeed would be certain death to her. Let me see you again, dear doctor, when the hurry of to-night is past—it is indeed delightful to have such an unquestionable monitor, one whose sources are so high—Good morning to you, dear doctor—bless me—did you hear that noise—we shall have the pope in London, and the papists will blow up the parliament house—I must go and see where poor Louisa is—good morning to you, doctor—

Exit.

Enter LAMBERT.

Aim. Congratulate me, my dear friend—literature will triumph over these flimsy coxcombs—Mrs. Belford is my warm and active friend, or will soon become so, and then it will be hard indeed if we can't plague the testy old gentleman to follow with his consent—

Lamb. But the young lady Dr. Aimwell—is not she to be consulted.

Aim. Oh I will dedicate my next book to her—Lambert, depend upon it you shall always

have a knife and fork at my table, and in the mean time, as you are in want of money, write a pamphlet against popery,

Lamb. Against popery?

Aim. Only be bold—paint St. Paul's in flames, clap a red hat on the bishops, give our naval chaplains a latin prayer book and a rosary—mount his holiness at Charing-cross.

Lamb. But will it do—doctor—will it do?

Aim. Do? why, man, you'll make your fortune—I should not be in the least surprised if you got into the cabinet. Do? nothing else will do—

Enter FLUSH.

Flush. Don't interrupt me—Where is Mr. Edward Belford? Such a prologue to my tragedy: never half so good in my whole life.

Lamb. We must have you, Mr. Flush, to write the doctor's epitaphium.

Flush. Warm and glowing, eh? and sly too? surprising the reader into passion—like a woman of the town in a veil.—Let the reviewers say what they please, this is the stile that makes a work sell. Where is Mr. Edward Belford.

Lamb. He has just sent me word he is engaged till the dinner hour—suppose we walk out for the sake of an appetite.

Flush. Fly—rather say—this is capital indeed

—well—gentlemen—I can promise you such a treat after dinner.

Aim. Be sure it is after dinner—Mr. Lambert, I attend you.

Lamb. Pray go first good doctor. *Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A library in Mr. Belford's house.*

EDWARD BELFORD.

E. Bel. Now is my sister wild about this masquerade. Oh! if her untainted blood can flow with such rapidity through its cool and wholesome channels, with what a fatal speed must it course, when impelled and inflamed at every turn by the dissipation of the world!

Enter LOUISA, drest as Ophelia.

God help her! she thinks she is only acting madness. Well—sister!

Louisa. Sister! nay—I know you not—but this I know, I have walked barefoot through stony ways and amongst briars and thorns, and my bleeding feet marked all my track, to gather these little sprigs and flowers—there's rue for you and cypress—wreathe them together, they will become you.

E. Bel. Come—come, sister—defer this acting till it's called for—it's lost upon me.

Louisa. The world, they say, made a wreath of laurel for him but he would not put it on—this, this will suit you better.

E. Bel. How extremely ludicrous you make yourself.

Louisa. Yes! I had a brother once—but he has forsaken me—and when I think of him, I loved him so, I cannot choose but weep. *Sings.*

They say, he'll come again,
Nor leave me thus alone :
Ah ! will he come again ?
Nor leave me thus to moan.

E. Bel. Louisa, this is too much—you act this too well. If I was not ashamed of my folly, I could fairly shed a tear.

Louisa. By my faith, I'll make an end of it. You shall hear. *Sings.*

Far to the east my hero hies,
His country's battles fighting,
Dead to the world my brother lies,
Earth and its pleasures slighting.

E. Bel. Dearest Louisa!

Louisa. Listen again—now I think on't, here's night shade—wear it, but do not taste it—they say 'tis poison—but no matter—I've lost

you already—What does it signify to poor Ophelia? *Sings.*

And all are lost to me!
Far, far away they fly!
To heaven I bend my knee,
'Tis heaven that hears me sigh.

E. Bel. There is surely no reality in this sorrow, Louisa.

Louisa. (*Sings.*)

Yet soon from the wars shall my hero return,
And full on his front shall the star of fame burn.

Well—be it as heaven sends it—we shall hear more anon—here are some that shall tell us more.

Enter LAURA and LADY LOVELL; the former as Miranda, the latter as a Swiss Shepherdess—masked—

Laura. (as Miranda.)

When first my gracious father drew me out
The map of this great world, and shew'd me man,
My untaught lips, with wond'ring rapture, cried,
How fair indeed the world! how beauteous man!
Now fiction yields to sad reality,
For man deform'd preys on his fellow-man,
Or rapt in stern misanthropy abhors
The paths alone where active virtue leads:
Oh! could I call on mighty Prospero,

To unstring his nerves and make him babe again!
Then one I'd choose and cradle him to virtue
In the recesses of my father's cell :
So when he entered on this world of strife,
Each mortal passion should be turn'd to love,
And ne'er be cold but to his enemies.

E. Bel. This is indeed to turn pleasure to good account: can the precepts of virtue fail, when so enforced—I have surely heard that voice; certainly I have heard it. Such precepts as these (*to Laura*) should not proceed from beneath a mask, lest they should be thought hypocrisy. Let me beg of you to give them their true and natural force.

Laura. No—no—no—

Show ing marks of dissent.

Louisa. (To Belford) singing.

"To-morrow is St. Valentine's day."

(*To Lady Lovell.*) You come, sweet shepherdess, from a cold and snowy region—this lady says the world is grown vicious; and for that reason the white and pure snow will not stay with us.

L. Lov. I come indeed from amongst snows
that remain through all the seasons of the year
—yet even there will the myrtle sometimes find
a shelter for its ever verdant leaves, just—just
as sense and meaning, lovely and unfortunate
Ophelia, appear through thy bewildered intel-
lects.

Louisa. (Singing) to Belford.

Cold his heart as mountain snow,
Yet brown his flowing hair !

To Laura.

Oh did his blood so coldly flow,
His poll were flaxen fair !

But come along sweet ladies; sweet ladies,
come along. There will be a great crowd got
together to see my poor brother's funeral.
Come—make haste—I'll sing to you, as I
gather cypress, and tell you how he died.

Did you my brother know
By youth, by ardent look ?
Ah no—a frown, a book,
These did my brother shew.

Laura. You shall be my Ariel, dear Ophelia,
for since my father discharged that charming
spirit, I have heard no music so sweet as
your's.

Now farther on my doubtful steps I guide
Through the deep mazes of this tangl'd world :
Why did my royal father break his wand ?
Oh ! it could tranquillize the stormy sea,
Or soothe the jarring elements to peace :
Now poor Miranda dreads the treacherous world,
Her father dead, and false her Ferdinand.

Exit.

L. Lov. (to Louisa.) Or thou shalt be the
spirit of my native mountains—for as thou

singest the snows will not be cold nor my way weary. Follow, follow, spirit. *Exit.*

E. Bel. Louisa, one word in sober sense before you go—one word I intreat you.

Louisa. (singing)

Low on my knees, I pray'd,
I knelt but to his bier :

E. Bel. Tell me, who is this Miranda ?

Louisa.

I knelt but to the dead,
Ah ! fruitless was my tear :

However, I will strew these flowers over his grave, for I ever lov'd him though he forsook me. *Exit.*

E. Bel. Always the way with these women : they never undertake any thing without over-doing it, and if they happen to fall upon an idea of some brilliancy, it is ruined by being carried to excess. Why could she not give me an answer ? There was nothing improper in the question. I have a great mind to send for a domino and go to the masquerade myself. No—no—I'll not make myself ridiculous neither—there is a masquerade warehouse on the other side the street and I should not be known—but if any of my friends found me out—no—I'll not go—pshaw ! how absurd to think of it —no—no—I have to finish the last pages of

the republic of Plato—it is curious to see what these old philosophers thought on the subject of politics! In my library I can find wit without pretension and wisdom without formality. What more can I desire? *Exit.*

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*An Inn.*

DELVILLE, *alone.*

Delville.

ONCE more then, I am in England, and in the same town with Belford. I could almost smile at my own enthusiasm, yet I cannot prevail upon myself to make any efforts to subdue my esteem and affection for that man. How I have loved and honored him ! There is some danger of failure in this scheme of mine, yet must I try him before I am introduced to him. If I find him, as I expect I shall, his friendship strengthened by absence and repentance, if too through his mediation I should succeed in a nearer and softer claim, how cheaply shall I have purchased such a prize—if all this should prove visionary, I must bend to my disappointment and bear my fate. I was once thought a good actor, and the sun has given me a natural mask, nor will I disdain the usual re-

sources of white locks, and some other personal disadvantages. I think I can disguise my voice entirely. Before, however, I bring my talents to their final test, I will make some experiments, in which my happiness is less at hazard, upon two or three of my other friends.

Enter SERVANT.

Have you got the dress I ordered.

Ser. Yes, Sir—it's quite ready, and I think exactly as you would wish it.

Del. Very well—I shall put it on immediately that I may rehearse my part. *Exit.*

Ser. Strange enough that my master should choose to go to a masquerade, when I should think a little quiet, with a sound stomach, would be the greatest luxury he could enjoy—For my part, my head turns as if I was in the ship still.

Exit.

SCENE II.—EVERARD'S *House*.

EVERARD, O'NEALE.

O'Neale. Never surely was any poor devil half so unfortunate as I have been through this whole morning. Every thing is at cross pur-

poses. I called upon Miss Lovell in order to make my atonement for a former inattention, and I had not been in the room five minutes, before I twice repeated the offence. I got my servant to plead my cause with the lady's waiting maid, but before he had half finished his business I broke in upon him and denied his assertions. Calling at Belford's where I knew certain ladies were at rehearsal, and meeting them full upon the staircase, I imagined the character of Miranda to be one that my bewitching sentimental widow would have chosen, and said nothing that was not a compliment to lady Lovell, while taking an Alpine shepherdess for Miss Lovell, I apologised for my inattention to her this morning, by laying the blame on her aunt—then as I hand them to their chairs, my dear inhabitant of the snows takes off her mask, discovers the face of lady Lovell, and chills me to the heart by a frown as cold as her adopted country. Did you ever hear of such a series of misfortunes?

Ever. Really you crowd such a prodigious number of incidents into a minute, that you must lay your account to some reverses. And if the balance is against you I cannot be astonished.

O'Neale. However, the conclusion of my visit to Belford gave me some compensation for all my other disasters.

Ever. How so?

O'Neale. His sister and myself read him a most powerful lecture upon the absurdity of his retirement—she in a dress, and with a look so becoming and beautiful, that if the masquerade were to last longer than a night, madness I believe would be the highest fashion—if we did not make him renounce his books, we succeeded in shewing him, that his new friends were abominable impostors, and that they only courted him to make him the instrument of their personal aggrandizement and pleasures—Indeed we almost convinced him that they were employed in inspiring his mother with superstitious fears, in order that one of them might obtain her consent and assistance to marry his sister. Oh, that you could have seen how he stormed ! But why so grave, Everard ?

Ever. Have you seen the newspaper? any news? that Russian general seems a clever fellow.

O'Neale. What now? on the banks of the Vistula? has the plebeian goddess been cruel?

Ever. Oh! if people are so blind to their own interests—but there is no making any thing of this upstart race—the good old aristocracy, I fancy, is the best.

O'Neale. Well—I confess—it does seem rather hard that a family, much more a whole order, should suffer because a woman does not happen to fall in love with you.

Ever. The thing that provokes me in this class of women, is, that they never balance ad-

vantages against disadvantages. The conveniences of this match on both sides are obvious to every one. It's true I am not a romantic lover, and heaven forbid I should be loved with romance. But then I am not a person to be hated, and if a sensible consideration of all the circumstances had been given to the whole affair, it must have succeeded.

O'Neale. A very sensible exposition truly ! what then ! is the whole affair at an end. I am happy to find we shall have no heart-breaking however ; no dereliction of the world, I fancy—bless my soul, if I was in your situation, I should set off this instant in a chaise and four, and drive to the Orkneys, with the hope of keeping my mind quiet by the rapidity of the body's motion.

Ever. I'll ride with you on the Downs, if you like.

O'Neale. Perhaps, Edward Belford will go with us, and we shall have an opportunity of enforcing our opinions upon the merits of these literary friends of his.

Ever. Pray, leave the whole family to themselves—they are so unintelligible, that by having much intercourse with them we shall be involved in continual difficulties. I believe it is always the best way for the different orders of society to keep within their respective bounds—the French revolution has given us a sufficient lesson on this subject.

O'Neale. I think I can give you an easy mode of soothing your vanity. Don't you think there's a cause for this refusal in—

Ever. What refusal do you mean?

O'Neale. Well—well—this coldness in a prior attachment, which, considering all the circumstances, you will allow to balance the advantages of your rank, fortune, person, &c. &c. I suspect Delville, if he returns home safe, will carry off the prize.

Ever. It may be so—now you mention Delville, will you give me once more the particulars of Belford's duel with him—I have heard them a thousand times, but as he is expected home, the story seems revived and likely to engross as much conversation as ever—let me have the circumstances from you again.

O'Neale. The whole affair is very soon understood—nothing was ever more plain—Belford fell in love with a beautiful girl, and introduced Delville to her in order to promote his addresses, by shewing her a friend he was so proud of—how it happened, I do not know, but, I suppose, from that fatality which usually perplexes all earthly schemes whenever female charms have their influence, the lady fell desperately in love with Delville, and deserted poor Belford—Belford, too vain or too heated to imagine that this change could have taken place in favor of a man, who was honorably plead-

ing the cause of his friend, after explanation upon explanation, which only ended in enflaming the parties, at last demanded satisfaction at the mouth of a pistol—They fought, as you know, and Delville was terribly wounded.

Ever. My life on Delville's honor!

O'Neale. He might be naturalized in my country. There was a deeper wound than any his body sustained, but Belford has atoned.

Ever. His conduct, I am told, in the East Indies, has been extremely brilliant.

O'Neale. As I always expected—he has proved his spotless honor by the valour he has shewn in fighting the battles of his country. From his last letters I fancy we may expect him in England any day—indeed if he sailed at the time he mentions, he ought to have been here already.

Ever. He will find his military glories enriched by the death of his uncle, who I am told, has left him his sole heir.

~~Bell.~~ And by a reward, which, I believe, he will value more than any riches, a reconciliation with Belford, and a marriage, which, with all my regard for you, I can't help wishing for. But what have I to do with the affairs of others when I manage my own so abominably—It cannot be helped—I must try my fortune again with my angry shepherdess, and make my peace with the young lady through her good offices—

Perhaps I'll ride with you in half an hour, but if I set off now I should go too fast for you.

Exit.

Ever. This affair does vex me a little, I confess—what book is this? (*Sits down and reads.*)

Enter SERVANT.

Ser. Sir—a Mr. Arundel is below and wishes to speak with you.

Ever. Who? I don't recollect the name—but shew him up.

Enter DELVILLE, disguised as an old man.

Del. I am aware, Mr. Everard, I should beg your pardon for interrupting you by a visit from one who is a perfect stranger to you.

Ever. Do not give yourself the trouble of an apology—pray be seated. (*They sit down.*)

Del. Perhaps I may afford you some insight into the subject of which I am going to speak to you, by telling you I am just come from the East Indies.

Ever. I shall be most happy to attend to you, sir, though really I don't at present recollect any connexion I have with that distant country.

Del. Then I fancy I am mistaken in the person—your name is Everard—the eldest son of lord Everard.

Ever. So far you are certainly right.

Del. I had a message from one who thought and called you his friend. Perhaps however he was mistaken. When a man has been long absent from his country, he is apt to imagine every acquaintance he has left behind him a friend.

Ever. Our connexion with the East Indies is now become so intimate, and our constant wars there occasion the sending out so many troops, that every man has probably many acquaintance in those countries. Whom do you mean?

Del. The person to whom I allude is Mr. Delville.

Ever. I am happy to hear we are to expect him shortly.

Del. One should suppose from his manner he was speaking of a party to dinner! *Aside.*

Ever. We may expect him any hour I fancy, Mr. Arundel.

Del. Alas! sir—never—exhausted by the heat of the climate, to which he has been exposed, he has fallen a victim to the consequences of a wound he received in battle, and died on his passage.

Ever. How unfortunate a circumstance!

Del. His remaining vigour was not sufficient to resist the attack of a consumption which carried him off in less than two months.

Ever. That is extraordinary—Delville had always an excellent constitution, which he never

injured by hard living, and a sea voyage I believe is generally recommended as a powerful remedy in these cases.

Del. I attended him, sir, on his death-bed, and amongst the friends to whom he wished me to say farewell in his name, on my return to England, you stood amongst the first.

Ever. He did me infinite honor! You seem disturbed, sir,—I own it was impossible not to have some regard for Delville, in spite of his faults.

Del. His faults, sir? Now for an original sort of epitaph without flattery. *Aside.*

Ever. He was a dull unsociable fellow to be sure—yet with a number of excellent qualities —his stile of living, poor man! it was perfectly intolerable—at table too the most perverse and irregular feeder—he has set my teeth on edge a thousand times. I have seen him eat vegetables with fish, and fill his mouth at the same moment with port wine and pine apple.—But I had a regard for him.

Del. You do him too much honor—an answer in his own way, (*aside.*) Now Mr. Everard, having discharged my commission, having given you the purpose of my visit, I will not trouble you any longer. This miserable virtue of fashionable decorum. (*Aside.*)

Ever. Do you stay long in Bath? I have a few friends to dine with me to-day—will you make one of them?

Del. I am sorry I am obliged to leave Bath almost immediately.

Ever. Or it would have given me great pleasure to have seen you. (*leading him to the door.*) Take care of that winding staircase, Mr. Arundel—it's extremely dangerous.

Del. (Aside.) How humbling it is to a man's vanity to outlive himself for a month or two.

Exeunt.



SCENE IV.—*North Parade.*

Enter O'NEALE and DUPONT.

O'Neale. Now for an attempt to make my peace with her ladyship. And if I can get her for a wife, I will trust to her to negociate a treaty of amity with her niece through the means of our family compact. Dupont, you dog!

Dup. Ah—sir—you would not let me manage the business for you when you wished to be reconciled to the young lady.

O'Neale. You are privileged to be impertinent—'sdeath, you rascal, when I ordered you to praise one lady, I did not mean you should calumniate another.

Enter DELVILLE.

Del. I must apologize to you, sir, for addressing you in the street—your name is O'Neale.

O'Neale. No apology at all is necessary. I was never ashamed of looking any man in the face, and if it will give you the least pleasure, you may address me at mid-day from the orchestra in the pump-room. This ill-looking fellow here is my servant, whom I inherited with the rest of my patrimony, and I assure you, in spite of his countenance, which I confess would hang him in any court of justice in the empire, he is a faithful honest rascal, whom I sometimes admit into my secrets.

Del. Not a jot altered, I see (*Aside.*) I am rather prest for time, Mr. O'Neale, or I should have done myself the pleasure of calling upon you: As however you give me the liberty of speaking to you here, I will tell you at once, that I am a messenger to you from an old friend of your's, at least from a man who called himself a friend of your's.

O'Neale. Don't be so delicate, my good fellow! I know no reason why a man should call himself a friend of mine unless he is so in reality. Who do you mean? If he can drink claret and love a pretty woman, I'll not disown him,

—and should he be an Irishman so much the better.

Del. I never heard he was deficient in the two first accomplishments: as to the last I am afraid he must plead guilty.

O'Neale. That's his misfortune.

Del. You will be able to conjecture who I mean, when I tell you I am just arrived from the East-Indies,

O'Neale. Ah! then you are going to tell me some news of my old friend Delville.

Del. You are right.

O'Neale. Poor Delville! he never had but one fault—that cursed propensity to blundering was his ruin.

Del. Alas! sir, we must now think of his virtues rather than his errors—let his faults be buried with him, in order that we may be corrected by the example of his merits.

O'Neale. Delville is well.

Del. We will hope so.

O'Neale. What does the man mean? he is well.

Del. He is indeed beyond the reach of sickness.

O'Neale. Dead, would you say? poor fellow! poor Delville! I lov'd him as my brother—never shall we find his equal—poor Delville! If there was a man, sir, to be chosen who might serve you in a difficult situation, that man was Del-

ville, and he is dead! always looking about, sir, for opportunities to do you a kindness, and seizing those which were thrown in his way—the most honorable creature in existence, sir—God bless me! what will become of Belford? You have not seen the family of the Belfords since you came to Bath—but you said you had a message from Delville to me—let me hear it—poor Delville!

Del. But a short message, Mr. O'Neale—I attended him on his death-bed—he died on his passage home, and as I was the only person on-board whom he knew intimately, he commissioned me with his last farewell to his friends.

O'Neale. This is a most unexpected misfortune! we were all hoping for his arrival at home—poor Delville! that he should have survived so far all the hazards of the climate, and his profession, and have died just in sight, as it were, of his native shore—oh! its lamentable!

Del. I have now to call upon Mr. Belford to give my intelligence there. If I might, on so short an acquaintance, beg a favor from you, which I can only do on the interest you have taken in the information I have given you, I would request you to accompany me to Mr. Belford's—I believe you have been a common friend of Mr. Edward Belford and Mr. Delville.

O'Neale. Yes—all my life—I knew them both at school—You have no notion, Mr. Arundel, what a queer out-of-the-way boy Delville always

was—I protest I can't think of him without a tear—whatever was to be done, if he was concerned in it, it was different from the common method—he had a new way of jumping, a new way of swimming, a new way of playing at cricket. The first never carried him over a ditch, but usually left him half way up to his middle in dirt—his water theory would have drowned him twenty times, if he had not been saved by his companions—and how he escaped a broken leg or an arm from the cricket balls, which he never stopped but by the opposition of some part of his body, is certainly most astonishing. Poor fellow! that cursed duel almost brought him down, and now at last he is gone! Well—sir—I'll shew you the way to Belford's, but you must be cautious how you communicate your intelligence—I suspect you will find weaker nerves than you have yet tried.

Del. Really, sir, I must consider myself as extremely obliged to you—

O'Neale. Not at all—not at all—

Dup. Have you any orders for me, sir?

O'Neale. Bless me—I forget my intention as to Lady Lovell—but do you go there, Dupont, and see if you can't contrive to get a message to her ladyship, telling her what has happened.

Dup. You really are going the other way, sir.

O'Neale. Get you gone—get you gone—That, Mr. Arundel, is the house. *Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*Belford's House.*

MR. and MRS. BELFORD—EDWARD BELFORD—
LOUISA.

Mrs. Bel. You are deceived, Edward—depend upon it—Dr. Aimwell has no purpose but to support the cause of truth, and the cause of truth he has supported.

Bel. What! because he has encouraged you to resist all my wishes—this sort of truth is like an independent man's politics—always in opposition—But you, Edward, of course think him still the only man to follow—the only man to hear.

E. Bel. I think so ill of him that I promise you never to see him but once more. Louisa—where are you going? why won't you tell me who Miranda was?

Louisa. Why in such preposterous haste, brother?

Enter SERVANT.

Ser. Mr. O'Neale and Mr. Arundel.

Bel. A friend of Mr. O'Neale's, I imagine, he wishes to introduce to us,

O'Neale. Belford—Mr. Arundel—I cannot call him a friend, but it will be with you, I believe, as it has been with me; the importance of his information will weigh much against the novelty of our acquaintance with him.

Del. (*Aside*) Very little changed, I perceive—(*Aside*) may I request your attention for a few minutes. *E. Belford and Delville converse.*

O'Neale. Your support was all powerful, Miss Belford; we fairly drove the enemy from the field—if you are so successful when you profess to disclaim reason, what are we to expect when you acknowledge it.

Mrs. Bel. Really, Mr. O'Neale—I wish you would drop this subject—it's well indeed if we are not forced to drop it in a manner we shall find rather awful.

E. BELFORD and DELVILLE come forward.

E. Bel. And you have seen much of him, you say.

Del. I was continually with him through the whole course of his declining health.

E. Bel. His declining health? all the accounts we have received of him gave us reason to suppose he was never better.

Del. Ah! sir—it is too often the cruel policy of men to flatter each other with better hopes of their friends' health than the truth will warrant; then when the reality comes—you seem alarmed, Mr. Belford, but I will venture to be ex-

plicit. When Delville went to Bengal, where I first saw him, his constitution had scarcely recovered the effects of a wound he received in a duel. It was on this subject alone he was ever reserved with me. I never heard any particulars from him—he condemned the system of duelling indeed, but further he never went.

E. Bel. The system?

Del. It is surely detestable.

E. Bel. It is horrible. It decides no appeal, it confirms no doubt, it asserts no plea, it defends no right, it establishes no character, it ratifies no truth, and so far from testifying real courage, it reduces to the same level the cowardly and the brave.

O'Neale. Gently, gently there—I do believe indeed the system of duelling cannot be easily reconciled to morality or to law, and perhaps as little to common sense, but it sometimes enables a weak body to do justice to a noble spirit in opposition to the tyrannic violence of brute strength.

Del. Who shall decide between us—shall we refer the question to the ladies?

Louisa. Not to the ladies, who may seem interested in a system so chivalrous. For my part however, when I hear of any man appealing to force, I conclude he does not himself imagine he has reason on his side.

O'Neale. The decision, I find, is against me.

E. Bel. Well—Mr. Arundel—you was giving me an account of Delville's health. The heat of the climate, rendered more dangerous by the exertions of his profession, may perhaps have been too much for him, but as he is now on his passage home, I am in great hopes that his native air and the care of those he will honor with his friendship (*Sighs*) will quickly restore him.—What is the meaning of this? you bring no information of a melancholy nature?

Del. Mr. Belford, I will not torture you with suspense—I have information to give you of the most unfortunate kind. Delville died on his passage.

E. Bel. Gracious heaven!

O'Neale. (*to E. Belford*) You must bear the blow manfully.

E. Bel. Then I must sink under it.

Louisa. What calamity is this?

E. Bel. What calamity? Delville is dead—my friend—my ever loved, honored, offended friend—your devoted protector—every man's idol.

Louisa. Alas! alas! is it possible.

Sinks in a chair.

O'Neale. I swear I could almost consent to die for the pleasure of being so lamented.

Mrs. Bel. What's the matter with the child? There is nothing very extraordinary in the intelligence. Mr. Delville was a soldier and ex-

posed to death in a thousand ways. Besides, I always knew he would never return.

E. Bel. Never return? mercy, mercy, heaven

Bel. Look up, Edward—take courage, man—the world is all before you yet, if you will but make the best of it.

E. Bel. Oh! had he died in England, I could have borne it. Had he given me the opportunity, the sacred opportunity of watching by him on his death-bed and receiving his forgiveness for the outrage I did him; in the last moment of fainting nature, had I marked the smile of pardon on his countenance, or caught the sigh, that I might have construed into regret at leaving me, then, then, I could have borne his loss. But now—at a distance—unforgiven—myself perhaps the cause of his death—it is intolerable, dreadful.

Bel. The affair is unfortunate certainly—however, there is always a consolation in having a thing decided some way or other. I am let into a secret too, which takes off the poignancy of my grief considerably.

Del. On one point your mind may be at ease. The last expression of Delville was full of the strongest affection and regard for you—his last sigh I will not dare interpret. *to Louisa.*

Bel. No—keep to the bare facts, if you please, Mr. Arundel.

E. Bel. I thank you, (*to Delville*) sir—for

your tears—oh that they should be so fruitless!

Del. I will now take my leave. You shall see me again shortly, when I will communicate all the particulars I think will interest you. You will then find how entirely you was forgiven, and that Delville, with Mr. O'Neale, would have almost wished to make the experiment of dying for the high privilege of being so lamented.

Exit.

E. Bel. Oh! what a blank is this world to me! What a dull, cold, cheerless waste I have to pass through, 'till I am at rest with Delville. Come, my dear Louisa, we will talk of his excellencies together, and follow the long, long enumeration with a sorrow that shall end only with our lives.

They join the group—the curtain falls.

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment at LADY LOVELL'S.*

Enter LADY LOVELL—LAURA.

Lady Lovell.

REALLY he is so excessively careless and imprudent, it is impossible to trust him. His errors indeed are not great, and he does not think them worth repenting of, but they are ludicrously numerous.

Laura. Oh ! he will improve.

L. Lov. At the same time I own I am not insensible to the pleasure of acting in a manner so essentially beneficial to the country. The intermarriage of the English and Irish, particularly since the union, is certainly highly desirable.

Laura. Yes—we shall canonize you as a patriot saint, and shew your figure in wax-work amongst the male idols of their country.

L. Lov. Then amongst all his blunders he has so much good in him, that it really would be

very praise-worthy just so far to reform him, as to give his virtues fair play.

Laura. In short, your marriage would be as much applauded by the church, as it would be serviceable to the state. How can you suffer any inferior feelings to weigh against these important considerations.

L. Lov. Ah! you know not, Laura, how I am torn by contending emotions. These considerations, I confess, have their weight with me, but then an infidelity to the memory of Sir Thomas is so excessively painful to me, that my heart dies within me when I turn from them to reflect upon the kindness and affection of that excellent man.

Laura. How shall I shew you that you indulge this impression too far. To follow with our tears those we loved and who loved us, if it were not a sacred duty and a feeling to be for ever cherished, would be venial, I should think, in the eyes of stoicism itself—would be pardoned even by the stern retired severity of Mr. E. Belford, but then we must take care that the light we burn for the dead is not taken from the living. To enforce all this—

Enter O'NEALE.

I believe here comes the best argument.

O'Neale. I am certainly the most fortunate

man in the world, and the good I do by chance is astonishing.

L. Lov. What a vain wretch he is !

O'Neale. I am so constituted that I must do good whether willingly or the contrary.

L. Lov. This is his repentance, I cannot endure him.

Laura. And pray what amazing act has relieved you so suddenly from the burden of your mauvaise-honte.

O'Neale. First, I have succeeded in curing Belford of his insanity, as far as Dr. Aimwell and his companion are concerned—next, I have brought two old friends together without once conjecturing that they had ever seen each other before.

L. Lov. How so ? you are very unintelligible.

O'Neale. Hear then the pleasantest news that ever met your ears. Delville is alive.

L. Lov. and Laura. Indeed !

O'Neale. Perfectly well—in full health, in the full tide of spirits, aye—in England too—his ill health, his consumption, his death were all a stratagem—the rogue only wanted to see what sort of an inscription his friends would write upon his tomb, and now up he starts, covered with the honors we bestowed upon him. The snow upon his head has melted before returning life, and his brown locks have reappeared. In short, Arundel is Delville.

Laura. Is it possible?—how happy, how very happy the Belfords will be!

O'Neale. Delville himself.—The Belfords yet know nothing of the matter, nor should I, if I had not been present by chance at his resurrection. When Mr. Arundel left the Belfords, at their request I followed the old gentleman to his inn to invite him to pass the evening with them. I enquired for him and he was denied to me. However, with the happy active sang-froid, which your ladyship has so often laughed at, and sometimes reproved, I walked into his room, and there what should I see but the old withered East Indian casting off his shroud and emerging at once into the youthful heroic vigor of our excellent friend. I shall never forget him. His eye yet glistened with the tear, his conviction of Belford's affection and repentance had watered it with, and satisfied hope irradiated all his countenance.

Laura. What happiness! what a blessed compensation for six years' misery and anxiety will this appear to Louisa and her brother.

L. Lov. And I hope by this time Delville is once more happy with his old friends.

O'Neale. I left him writing to Belford to tell him of his arrival and to implore his forgiveness for the painful trial he had put him to; then I made the best of my way here in order that I might have the honor of escorting you to Belford's, to witness the happiness that will prevail there.

Laura. I will accept of your arm.

L. Lov. I think I will not go—perhaps we shall only be troublesome.

O'Neale. We shall be expected—I told Delville of my intention, and my hope that I should persuade you to accompany me.

L. Lov. I'll not stir—I protest.

Laura. Nay—let us go.

L. Lov. We shall be dreadfully in the way.

Laura. Pray go.

O'Neale. Let me add my entreaties to those of Miss Lovell.

L. Lov. Well—upon my second thoughts, I believe we may as well go.

O'Neale. It will be a spectacle, depend upon it, the recollection of which will be an everlasting pleasure to us—and my arm is always at your ladyship's service.

L. Lov. The boldness of this man is quite amazing! well—pray shew us the way.

Laura. (*As they go out.*) Remember the good of your country, and the pleasure and utility of working a reformation, my dear aunt. *Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—BELFORD'S *House*.

EDWARD BELFORD—AIMWELL—LAMBERT.

E. Bel. After considering all the circumstances of your conduct, and comparing them with

the conversation you have held with my mother, I fear too frequently for her peace of mind, it is impossible for me to resist a conclusion so unfavorable to you.

Aim. We were in hopes, Mr. Belford, of discussing a more important topic with you than this.

E. Bel. No topic can in my mind be more important. You have acted a part totally inconsistent with any honorable feeling, or the best relations of social life. As men you should have detested the trick of impostors; as gentlemen to have practised your impositions upon a woman. In the common intercourse of society I should have thought no punishment too severe for such a conduct, but when I recollect your high pretensions, if individual character could be allowed to stain a great cause, I should mourn also over degraded literature.

Lamb. Is it possible that you, sir, should join the outcry of the mob in pursuing my friend's petty faults (even allowing the charges against him to be proved) while you are capable of estimating his higher merits.

E. Bel. I am not disposed to class the fault, of which I am now complaining, so low. But granting this to be the case, I confess I am so far one of the mob as to consider talents only admirable as far as they enforce morality, meliorate our manners, or contribute to innocent and correct amusement.

Aim. I defy my bitterest enemy to mention a single sentence in any of my works unfavorable to the cause of virtue. Have I not fixed my eye on the most distant period of antiquity, and when the light was too faint for the weak and sickly sight of the present generation, strengthened it so as to bring it full before them? Can any man now doubt the precise date of the largest of the Egyptian Pyramids? can any man be mistaken as to the foundation of Babylon? can any man now question the age of Homer? Have I not published a tour through almost all Europe; through France, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, the Greek islands? Is there a town I have not described, even to the exact breadth of the streets, and the size of the paving stones? In giving a picture of the inhabitants, have I omitted the turn of a hat or the shape of a buckle? Have I not signed the death-warrant of Sir Isaac's theory of the heavenly bodies, and made the stars move once more according to the rules of common sense and sound reason?

Lamb. And I—I—have not I boldly chosen for my history a time when all my reasoning must be theory, all my facts conjectures, and all my characters fictitious? Is there a page when I was not compelled to have recourse to fancy, and to eke out my scanty materials by the labours of the imagination? While the generality of historians are industriously compiling from the past, I have been putting all the facul-

ties of the soul in one general requisition for almost every sentence.

E. Bel. I will not now dispute with you, gentlemen, whether these claims of your's are false or exaggerated. I, who live in the inferior world of common men, must endeavour to support those lesser duties of life which surround us at every moment ; which more than make up in frequency of occurrence, what they want in magnitude ; the infringement of which has so often rendered great qualities (you see I grant you your assumed merits) dangerous, useless or contemptible. If the errors of genius are more than pardonable, if we follow them but with our forgiveness and our sympathy, it is because they are generally destructive only to the possessors, but should they tend to the ruin of others' happiness, should they be connected with sordid and malignant plots of mere personal aggrandizement ; should they involve the prostitution of literature and sacred gifts, we at once deride and condemn, despise and punish.

Aim. Surely Mr. Belford, there can be no breach of friendship between us.

E. Bel. One that must last for ever ! The supposition that it can ever be repaired aggravates the enormity of your offence. From books of a very different cast from your's, one of the first lessons I learnt was, amidst general precepts of fair dealing and honor, that respect for the other sex is the foundation, or at least the

attendant of all the virtues—every day's experience confirms the impression, and proves to me, that those who possess it not, are fit only for a solitude as savage as themselves.

Lamb. Be not dejected, Dr. Aimwell. Others will estimate your learning more justly.

E. Bel. Leave me—leave me—I insist upon it—you, with your dishonorable practices, and you, with your consolations.

Exeunt Aimwell and Lambert.

As they are going out, Enter FLUSH.

Flush. Stay—gentlemen—for heaven's sake stay—stay good doctor—Hey-day—what's the matter now?—well—no great consequence—they are not the best judges in the world—Mr. Belford you shall have it all to yourself—such an impromptu—

E. Bel. Do not pester me, sir—I am not in a humour for poetry—

Flush. Such an impromptu on seeing a flake of snow fall on a lady's arm last year—

E. Bel. An impromptu on an event that happened last year?—I'm engaged at present—I cannot attend—your friends are both gone—pray sir,—

Flush. Oh—a quarrel, is it—a separation—however the impromptu shall be an impromptu in

spite of him—Mr. Belford your most obedient—when you wish to hear it send for me, that is all—or you'll find it in the next volume of my poetical flower garden—

Where is the envious stranger gone?
 I look, but cannot find it here,
 It griev'd to find itself outdone,
 And melted in a silent tear.

Beautiful—beautiful—most beautiful. *Exit.*

EDWARD BELFORD, alone.

E. Bel. Oh, Delville ! hadst thou been living, with what a holy flame would thy breast have burnt against such a conduct.

Enter LOUISA.

Well, Louisa, I have been employing all my eloquence according to your directions.

Louisa. And in return I will tell you who Miranda was.

E. Bel. Nay, I care not now. I should have thanked you last night.

Louisa. Then I'll not tell you.

E. Bel. As you please. Good heavens ! sister ! how cheerful you are ! Is the memory of poor Delville so utterly lost in your mind ?

Louisa. I shall never think of him again till I see him.

E. Bel. Would to heaven that time were come for me!

Louisa. Shall I tell you who Miranda was?

E. Bel. Is the woman mad? why, why torture me in this manner? Are not my afflictions already deep enough?

Louisa. Well, my dear, gloomy, desponding brother, read that letter, (*giving a letter,*) and should you want any further intelligence on it's contents, we will call in the town to supply us with it. You know the hand. When you have read it, I will give you my other piece of information.

E. Bel. Your levity, Louisa, pains me. Delville's hand and signature! a last farewell perhaps, his dying forgiveness.

Louisa. My cheerfulness, I believe, is rather misplaced. Well, brother?

E. Bel. (*Reading,*) Is it possible? Is this real?

Louisa. Quite possible—quite real. If you don't make haste and get through the letter, Delville himself will be here to interrupt you.

E. Bel. This happiness is so unexpected, that—but let me see once again. (*Reads*) “I have “to beg pardon, my ever honored, ever lament-“ed friend, for a stratagem, which, I fear, has “given you much pain. The singularity of my “situation must be my apology, as I felt it ne-

"cessary to ascertain what were your sentiments with regard to me, before I could introduce myself to you, with a view of renewing our former intimacy. This consideration, I trust, will excuse my conduct as far as it regards you, and you will do me the justice to conclude that it was adopted for no further purpose."

Louisa. Very careful indeed to guard against the idea that he felt the least anxiety on any other person's account.

E. Bel. I must admire the candor of your interpretation.

Louisa. Now, shall I tell you who Miranda was?

E. Bel. (Reading) "My arrival from the East-Indies has been accompanied with a rich inheritance from my uncle. I shall take the earliest opportunity"—Did you speak, sister? "the earliest opportunity"—

Enter DELVILLE.

Del. My excellent—most excellent friend!

E. Bel. It is you—you alone who must bear that name: you, whose steady friendship, casting off all inferior difficulties, has persevered unshaken by time or circumstances to the happiness of this day.

Del. I chose you, Belford, from all the world,

as the companion and honor of my life, and when we separated I could find no resource but in the most active of the professions. I left you to yourself, for I knew your sterling worth—I knew that if you were right no earthly power could make you suffer, if wrong, that all reproach was superfluous tyranny.

E. Bel. It is my proudest consolation that you have judged well. Six year's repentance, I will dare to hope, may qualify me for your esteem, and if I might venture to aim at any influence, a nearer connexion—

Looking at Louisa who has retired.

Del. Miss Belford?—you must forgive the rudeness of a soldier, who has lately had no residence but the camp or the ocean.

Louisa. Who has not been so long on the seas as to have forgotten his skill in a ruse-de-guerre.

Del. Whose hopes are so much checked by his alarms, that he fears no advance has been made towards the object of his highest ambition.

Enter BELFORD and MRS. BELFORD.

Mrs. Bel. (On seeing Delville, Mrs. Belford utters a loud scream.)

Louisa. What is the matter?

Mrs. Bel. It is his ghost—it must be his ghost.

Bel. Really I am almost as much astonished as my wife: however, I am sincerely glad to see you, Mr. Delville, if it is only for my son's sake. For it seems you and the world are so connected in his mind that the loss of one is the surrender of both.

Mrs. Bel. Do you all see him? or is it only I that see him? Good lord! it moves.

Bel. Was there no prophecy for this, Mrs. Belford? did no star shoot eastward?—was there no conjunction in the heavens that foretold this meeting? was there no oracle from an Aimwell or a Lambert? is old Nixon silent upon such an event as this?

Mrs. Bel. Mr. Belford, you know I am always shocked by your levity on these subjects. As for Dr. Aimwell and his friend, I despise them as much as you can do.

*Enter EVERARD, O'NEALE, LADY LOVELL,
LAURA.*

O'Neale. Come along—Everard—I am glad we met you. If I mistake not we shall witness a scene to thaw your more than Grandison decorum. Do you see that shrivelled old fellow? (*pointing to Delville*) with his white head? Have you no veneration for old age? Am I the only

person in the party who knows how to respect declining years?

Ever. Whether as Arundel or Delville, I am sincerely glad to see you,

(*To Del.*) Though when I look around me, I may be excused perhaps some feelings of envy.

Bel. So—so—I perceive the reasons of my daughter's objections to the match I proposed to her, have been known some time to all the world except her father. (*Draws E. Bel. aside and converses with him.*)

Mrs. Bel. I was not deceived in one point however. Mr. Everard is not the man.

Louisa. What scheme are my father and Edward contriving?

O'Neale. (*To L. Lov.*) Does your ladyship repent having followed my recommendation?

Laura. There is nothing like obedience to the commands of this lordly sex, you see, aunt.

L. Lov. You are both extremely provoking.

E. Bel. (*To Bel.*) I confess, sir, it has been the first and most cherished object of my life, so mingled indeed, and wound up with every feeling I would indulge as most conducive to my happiness, that your assent to it, and assistance in forwarding it, would be to crown most splendidly and worthily all the countless obligations I owe to you—and you, Louisa, if before this circle of our friends—

Louisa. My dear brother, while you are so very anxious to provide for my happiness, can you find no one here to whom you are to look for your own.

E. Bel. (To Laura.) There is one to whom I would aspire if my hopes were as hardy as my wishes.

O'Neale. That is extremely well—i'faith—for a philosopher! for a recluse monastic student, who has been poring over your original—how was it, Belford? your original uncreated forms?

E. Bel. Oh! how humbly and yet how proudly would I bow to another sceptre, and own another kingdom?

O'Neale. You must take the poor gentleman under your jurisdiction, Miss Lovell. (*O'Neale converses with L. Lov.—Delville with Louisa.*)

Laura. Sir—you spurned my sceptre, you rejected all allegiance to me. You set up an independent throne, on which you took care there should be no room for me.

E. Bel. Alas! it was a cold, loveless, joyless empire, if empire it can be called, over feelings that so often mutinied, over affections that would still rebel: but now these insurrectionary subjects of your's bend submissively before an authority that subdues as much by it's reason as it dazzles by it's brilliancy, or if they yet hold back, it is for fear of offending you by approaches too daring.

Laura. But if I accept the homage of these humble submissive slaves, what security shall I have that they will not hereafter avail themselves of every weapon accident may supply, and exercise a cruel remorseless tyranny.

E. Bel. What security would you demand or rather what would you accept? Will the past painful experience of a barren fruitless solitude suffice, or shall I prove the sincere ardor of my attachment, by the long and tried devotion of a lover.

L. Lov. (*To O'Neale.*) I'll not live in Ireland, I protest. One might as well be banished to Kamscatka.

O'Neale. Part of the year I trust you will employ yourself in clipping the wings of my wild countrymen.

L. Lov. There is one condition I must stipulate in our marriage articles.

O'Neale. A verbal request will be the most powerful pledge for you.

L. Lov. I have observed that whenever you speak either to my servants or your own, your language is such as to make one believe you regarded them as absolutely of a different species. In short, the thing is come to such a pass, that I fancy I shall be obliged to form a completely new establishment, you have so completely frightened those who compose my present one. You really must learn to treat your inferiors with a little more civility than

you seem to think it necessary to employ towards them. You can never be half-naturalized in England till this happens.

O'Neale. You are right—you are right—it is the unfortunate error of our education—it is the degradation of a noble national character—if an improvement in this respect should be the result of our nearer connexion with the English—

E. Lov. It is in my opinion the only improvement you can receive from us.

Louisa. (To Del.) I do not pretend to be above feeling pleasure in your accession of fortune, particularly as it will secure my father's consent, but yet perhaps, had this event been otherwise, I should have felt no little glory in shewing the world how sincerely I could love you for yourself.

Del. How poor, how wretchedly poor am I still, when I would thank you for such a declaration !

Louisa. (To E. Bel.) Well, Edward—have you discovered who Miranda was ? does she require her father's wand to charm you back into the world ? You see how easily the same attachment prevails in all the parts of the same family !

Sings as in the character of Ophelia.

No longer my brother moves,
With cold and downcast look,
Ah no ! he lives and loves,
And leaves his frown and book !

Ever. This is all highly amusing, Mr. Bel-ford—Have you no clergyman at hand to conclude this comedy?

Bel. No—not immediately—but I will take care and provide one as soon as the necessary preparations can be made—that is, if my wife's dreams are pleasant in the mean time. I am a fortunate man after all. My children have provided for their own happiness, and in their own way; and I must say this for them, they have chosen an honorable and a noble one. The feelings they have manifested are their own reward, but I rejoice in the thought that I am rich enough to give those feelings all the force of a splendid and authoritative example.

THE END.

NINUS,

A TRAGEDY.

TO THE COUNT DE MESNARD.

I HAVE endeavored in the tragedy of which I beg your acceptance, to exhibit a brave and accomplished prince aiming, with the assistance of a small band of gallant friends, to recover a lost throne. The events which have taken place in Europe for the last fifteen years, have unfortunately withdrawn my subject from the poet, and have given it to the historian; and this in such a manner, that no labours of the imagination will be found to add any thing to the sublimity of the virtues, or the dignity of the adversity displayed in a bare narration of facts. If the lapse of time enables you to contemplate with a mild and chastened sorrow the disasters in which you have borne such a share, the propriety of my dedication will be obvious to every one. If this should not be the case, if the

events to which I allude are still too recent or too severe for so happy an effect, I must plead for the forgiveness of yourself at least, from the pleasure I feel in taking every opportunity of expressing my personal gratitude to virtues which have been the means of contributing so largely to my own happiness, and to that of a most near and dear connexion.

JAMES MASON.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ASSUR. *The reigning and usurping King.*
NINUS. *His Nephew, the rightful King,
disguised under the name of
Araxes.*

MITRANES. { *A Lord in the court of Babylon—
Friend of Ninus.*

OROES. *High Priest, Protector of Ninus.*
SETHAR. *An old Lord—Friend of Ninus.*

MERES. { *Lords—Enemies of Ninus.*

ZAPHAN. }
Ambassadors from Judea.

SEMIRAMIS. *Queen; mother of Ninus.*

AZEMA. *A Princess of the family of Ninus.*

Priests—Courtiers—Soldiers.

Scene, Babylon.

N I N U S.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Palace—A Hall of Audience.*

Enter MITRANES and MERES.

Meres.

FAME has pronounced with all her hundred
tongues,

And speeds Araxes' glory through the earth.

Mit. 'Tis justly great—and it stands off so
clear,

Unmix'd with base alloy, that slander shrinks
In hopeless cowardice, nor envy breathes
The cold ambiguous sneer—the people's shouts,
That echo'd through the streets and reach'd the
skies,

Are here but soften'd in the courtier's smile,
That seems for once sincere—on beauty's cheek
The general feeling sheds a warmer glow,
Or fondly glistens in the half-form'd tear.

Meres. And yet one frown there was, a stedfast frown,

That well might balance many meaner smiles,
Were ancient loyalty preferr'd at court,
To any tale of gaudy novelty.

Mit. Oh had our sovereign mark'd my friend
in arms,

As to the breach in Kedar's hostile walls,
Bringing his counsels to their great result,
He led his desperate charge, o'er-bearing all
That had withstood nine years our nation's hate,
And when the mighty conquest was secur'd,
Seen how he check'd th' infuriate soldier's rage,
Mid the triumphant roar, melting in mercy,
Till female innocence confiding smil'd,
And not a hair was touch'd, but of the guilty,
Binding the foe more strongly than in chains,
E'en royalty itself had bow'd its front,
And bent submissive to the general rapture.

Meres. (Aside.) What! does the censure of
this upstart's friends

Aim at so high a mark? We must be watchful:
He has received a more substantial meed,
A rank that equals him with our first nobles,
And hides his unknown parentage in honor:
What would ambition more? obscure, ignoble,
Thrown on the court, a weak, unfriended boy,
Scarce have the years of manhood brac'd his
nerves,

When he starts up in all the pomp of rank,
And wins a splendid station near the throne.

Mit. Won it he has ! won it by matchless service !

Alas ! how vain to think that envy slept ! *Aside.*
'Twas not my purpose, Meres, to condemn
The mighty Assur—you remark'd his frown
And kings are skill'd to search the depths of action :

No doubt 'twas just—

Meres. Most just, be sure, Mitrane. Howe'er the princess paid large recompense, And in Araxes' view a lady's smiles Outweigh a monarch's frown.

Mit. Araxes is most loyal :

Meres. Loyal ? who doubts it, sir ? 'twas a mere fancy That just escap'd my lips--yet may a smile Too warmly play to please the kingly eye, For ever wakeful o'er the last remains Of Ninus' royal house—lovely Azema— Should she so elevate some child of fortune, Some orphan sav'd from want by priests and women.

Mit. That child of fortune storm'd the walls of Kedar ;

What mighty Babylon, with all her force, In tented field pavillion'd nine long years, Her nobles all in arms, her treasure drain'd, Urg'd but to suffer insult and defeat, That poor unknown achiev'd, that wretched orphan.

Meres. Well—we shall try him further—Ke-dar taken,
 These noisy messengers of proud Judea
 Will now have answer—not of peace, I ween :
 Assur detests them and their scanty creed :
 And see the hour of audience arrives :
 The king approaches—

Enter the KING, QUEEN, ZAPHAN, Courtiers.
 —ARAXES follows invested with an order of nobility—the king and queen take their seats on the throne.

King. (*to Araxes*) Draw near, young lord—that title well becomes
 The soldier who returns with laurels crown'd,
 And meets at home the popular applause :
 Fame is the bright reward of young ambition,
 And a whole people hail thy service done :
 Howe'er unwont to deem the multitude
 Skilful to judge of valorous emprise,
 I have so far indulg'd the general voice,
 That now your station far exceeds your birth,
 And your command gives scope to mightier
 deeds :
 Now more than patriot warmth shall fire your
 breast,
 Just to your country—grateful to your king.
Mit. (*Aside*) No lessons here will teach him
 gratitude,

Save what exact a pledge of future toil.

Queen. And let your queen, Araxes, pour her thanks

For valiant deeds that swell our country's power.

Arax. To heav'n the praise : if I it's instrument,
Obedient to your majesties, have serv'd
In ought my country, 'tis a debt I owe
For care vouchsaf'd my unknown, friendless
youth :

I have no claim to honor but by deeds,
No charter'd rights of proud inheritance,
But while I breathe the air, must breathe to act :
I have no dwelling but the martial field,
Where horse and foot in fierce contention join,
Or where the phalanx, with dread enginry
The ramparts rive that scoff my sovereign's
pow'r :

If mid these great attempts that fire your ser-
vant,

Some happy deed should win your gracious
smile,

And raise my humble name to titl'd honor,
'Tis but to bless the life I most adore,
And gild with fame my bosom's darling passion.

Mit. (*Aside*) Fear not, brave friend : you'll
find employment here,

War sits on Assur's brow—sternly resolv'd.

Sethar. Just heaven ! that voice, that look !
himself reviv'd ! *Aside.*

Queen. What sudden anguish presses on my
heart !

Meres. See how the court's inflam'd ! no soul
exempt !

Curse on his shewy proud humility ! *Aside.*

King. Enough—now state affairs of moment
press :

The stubborn Israelite awaits his answer,
And dares on equal terms to treat of peace :
Press'd by disasters to negociate,
With pride concealing ill his shatter'd strength,
A treach'rous amity he could not force.

What say my lords ? shall it be peace or war ?

Meres. I speak for war, oh king !—that race
accurs'd,

Who spurn the worship of almighty Baal,
And yet betray the god they would adore :
That nation fam'd for perfidy and guilt,
Whose specious lies, miraculously great,
Affect the sanction of o'er-ruling heav'n,
In every station, mark'd with every crime,
Or fix'd or wand'ring, or in camp or town,
Rebellious, weak, ungovernable, mean,
Who keep no pact ; possess no common law ;
Their faith, their rule, their deity their own !
Peace has no name with them, for peace is war !
They boast to raise a mighty capital,
That shall obscure this great Chaldean glory,
*“ This morning sun,” imperial Babylon !
Jerusalem or Babylon must fall.

Zap. War—war!

Mit. So sycophants betray a people!

Meres. Think of your vast resources mighty king :

Your ships bring home the produce of the world,
And proud Euphrates rolls a golden wave :
Your revenues increase with lengthen'd war,
And past disasters swell the soldier's triumph :
E'en the worn veteran burns to avenge his gods,
And conquer those whom treaties cannot bind.

King. The gen'ral voice is plain ! alas ! for kings,

When forc'd to war by counsels not their own,
They must impose fresh burdens on their subjects : *Sethar rises.*

What says the aged Sethar—prudence guides him.

Sethar. I own, great king, my spirits keep no pace

With these too daring counsels—I rejoice
To find them alien to the royal breast.

Mit. The tongue he should have said—now

Meres smiles. *Aside.*

Sethar. 'T may be the vice of age to wish for peace,

And antedate the rest it near approaches :

Whate'er the wisdom, duty bids me speak,

For conscience cannot trifle round the grave :

King. What does the dotard mean ? *Aside.*

Sethar. Why should we fight ?

The highest feelings of a nation's pride

Must sure be satisfied, when humbl'd foes
 Send their ambassadors to sue for peace :
 Mighty are your resources—mighty too
 A kingdom's sway—your ports, your palaces,
 Your royal state, your offices of rule,
 Your splendid cities, glorious Babylon,
 Commerce and arts, science, the works of taste,
 Betray the dread effects of lengthen'd war :
 Vast are your riches—grant the conquest sure,
 Why rush to battle to acquire more ?
 Faithless be Judah's sons, and stain'd with
 crime :

Those who in abject language sue for peace,
 Will scarcely break the treaties they implore :
 Or be they broken—are we unprepar'd ?
 Are we turn'd cowards, by the foe's injustice ?
 And as our cause improves, must we decay ?
 Prove accusations of deep perjur'd guilt,
 Against a race abandon'd, curs'd of heav'n :
 What stronger cause to leave them to their
 fate,
 To civil broils and vengeance from the gods ?
 I pray and plead for peace—a lasting peace !

Meres. Perish such peace ! the doating grey-beard's sermon

Settling his audit with the angry gods.

Sethar. Rash lord !—be still, my soul ; 'tis idle rage ;

Those gods are working for the kingdom's safety.

Aside, looking to Araxes.

King. Speak you, Araxes : services so late
Give your opinion weight :

Arax. My art is war :
I live to execute your high commands.
A soldier in debate takes little part ;
He only furnishes a strong right arm.

Courtiers. War, war.
King. What potent influence attends the
youth !
We wait the messengers—now, Judah, tremble !

*Enter the Embassadors of JUDEA—preceded by
officers of state.*

King. Embassadors of Judah ! we have
weigh'd
Your specious offers, and consid'ring well
The various bearings of our puissant state,
Our vast prosperity, our conquering arms,
Our royal dignity, our faith allied,
With the concurrent voice of these our nobles,
Declare for a continuance of war :
We form no treaties but with tribute nations :
From the dark desarts of th' impervious north,
To where the sea washes the Syrian shore,
And far where Egypt spreads her teeming
plains,
Eternal Babylon shall reign alone :
This be our answer to your wand'ring tribes :
Go, bid them tremble at a second bondage.
Amb. Insulting king, whose taunts and blas-
phemies

Rouse in our hearts such passions as thine own,

Know we repose upon the living god :
Thee and thy graven idols we defy :
Our wand'ring tribes have fix'd an endless throne,

Immutable as holy Zion's base :
The day will come, when in his anger rous'd,
The great invisible shall stretch his arm,
And " Midian's slaughter, by the rock of Oreb," *

Shall be but mock'ry to that dreadful day :
The east shall know one empire—that of Israel :
One house alone shall reign—the house of Jacob :

King. To arms ! and be the prize the conqueror's :

Descending from his throne.

Where was the power that guards the house of Jacob,

When Hamath, Arpad, and Sepharvaim fell : †

Was Baal impotent t' avenge his servants

When Kedar's valleys smok'd in patriot blood ?

Sethar. (Aside) Mercy, ye powers, mercy on mankind !

King. Zion shall tremble to it's utmost top,
And prostrate shall her tow'ring cedars fall,
When my arm'd myriads in their fell career,
With fire and famine dogging at their heels,
On horse or foot, or charioted shall pour

* Isaiah, chap. 10.

† See note at the conclusion.

Their murd'rous vengeance on my hated foes :
 Your upstart city, new Jerusalem,
 Shall soil it's glitt'ring splendor in the dust :
 Your palaces shall fall, your temples fall ;
 In the recesses, where your whining priests
 Perform their rites and guard your sacred ark,
 My soldiers shall adore their country's gods !
 Silent, widow'd shall be Jerusalem !
 Where now the busy citizen pursues
 The various paths that bless or damn mankind,
 There shall the weed of desolation grow,
 And Zion then be guiltless !
Sethar. Tyrant, monster !
 His fancy riots in these scenes of blood !

Aside.

Arax. Yet by the victor's side shall mercy sit,
 Pleading in tears that never fall in vain,
 When heroes triumph in their country's cause.

King. Of words no more—War is in action,
 lords !

Meres, attend—Araxes wait my pleasure.

Exeunt King—Courtiers—Embassadors, &c.

Queen. (*to Araxes as she follows.*)
 Let not Araxes in such haste obey
 These stern commands, as not to spare a moment,
 To bid his grateful queen a last farewell.

Arax. I shall attend my gracious sovereign's
 will : *Exit queen.*

ARAXES and MITRANES remain.

Arax. Then to the wars again—again the
 camp.

'Tis well—hast seen my horses, good Mitrane?—
My black, they say, is worn with wounds and
toil;

He shall have rest for life: he well deserves it:
Think you my roan will nobly fill his place:
He can outstrip the blast along the desert:
Nor will he need a spur when the loud trumpet
Amidst the streaming standards sounds to battle.

Mit. He paws it bravely and his nostrils
stretch'd

Shew the deep crimson of a martial race:
But now the holy Oros demands you:
The sacred sire to whose o'ershadowing care,
My country owes Araxes, I my friend:

Arax. Nay, do not flatter me—the people's
smile,

I grant is mine—Mitrane, I have launch'd
With canvass open on a dang'rous sea,
Where blazing meteors seem our polar star,
But as we follow vanish into night:
You find me serious, and in truth I feel
An anxious weight that presses at my heart
And makes my honors fruitless—Oros—

Mit. To-day has promis'd to reveal your
birth,

And the whole myst'ry of your fate unravel:
This is no cause of grief:

Arax. Alas! I know not:

Why is this myst'ry? why the tale deferr'd?
I am some child of infamy, Mitrane:
Some orphan outcast of a guilty bond:
And now, the holy father fearing lest

These recent honors should out-swell my pride
 Would curb my spirit with a parent's shame.

Mit. No parent's shame can blot the glorious
 acts

Of heroes fighting for their country's good !
 Rulers of fortune, they controul their fate :
 The past is gone, irrevocably gone,
 Yet did eventful time roll back its tide,
 How could you croud it with more splendid
 deeds,
 More dazzling bright than those already done ?
 The present and the future are your own :
 Why, why should fancy thus betray your joys,
 Or sink the object of his country's love ?
 'Tis now four years since Oros declar'd
 His this day's purpose, but (thanks to high heav'n)
 The warrior's ardor led you to the field.

Arax. Yes—and when first I told him my de-
 sign

To give my country's arms my little aid,
 He trembl'd at the dangers I should run,
 As if my life obscure could be employ'd
 Better than in such hazards : then he promis'd
 That my return should be illustrated
 By a complete disclosure of my birth.

Mit. Then speed you to the interview, re-
 memb'ring

'Tis not in fate to rob you of your glory.

Arax. Full sixteen years ere yet the camp I
 saw,
 Had pass'd in silence on this theme alone !
 Now 'mid the pressure of our state affairs,

In the recesses of our holiest temple,
 I have to meet my sacred guardian,
 And hear at last the mystery disclos'd :
 Would you not wonder were my soul at ease ?
 Whate'er my fate, my country is in arms,
 And one great act may stamp my fame for ever !

Mit. And me, ye gods, oh grant no other
 boon,

But still to follow as Araxes fights.

Arax. The slave, that serv'd his country, was
 immortal :

And, dear Mitrances, for some after time,
 Haply our fate preserves a glorious record
 Of friends, fast knit by patriot services,
 And early, long affection tried in peril,
 Winning together the heroic meed :

Araxes may not shame his noble friend :
 The solemn hour draws nigh—Now to the tem-
 ple.

Mit. Be your fears false, and your best wishes
 crown'd !

My way points here—ere close of day, remem-
 ber,

The public council meet.

Exit.

Arax. To choose an heir
 To th' eastern throne and to as bright a meed,
 The high-born and ador'd Azema's love.

As Araxes goes out, enter AZEMA.

Az. (Aside) Araxes !

Arax. Madam, shall your prayers
Guard the poor soldier in the hour of danger?

Az. As far as humble woman may aspire,
My prayers shall aid my country, and Araxes:
Those names, I hear, can ne'er be separate.

Arax. When waves the warrior's crest in beauty's eye,
Hereditary fame must fan the plume:
I dare not hope such weak exploits as mine
Shall win your smile, or e'en in death, your sorrow.

Az. Where has Araxes learnt the stoic sneer?
Now let him know, ere yet he goes to battle,
Not death alone may cause Azema's tears—

Exit.

Arax. What is this world? and what a wretch am I,
Plac'd in a court—disqualified for court!
With glory fir'd, and yet condemn'd to suffer
Each coxcomb's sarcasm on my birth unknown!
Compell'd to love, where e'en to look is treason,
Envi'd, derided, honor'd and despis'd;
Now high in hope, now sinking in despair:
But soon the holy father lifts the veil,
And makes one evil less—this dread suspense:
Then for the battle, where no alien fame
Follows the patriot arm that strikes victorious,
Or sinks unnerv'd in honorable death. *Exit.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The Temple of Babylon—A splendid Altarpiece.*

SETHAR—OROES.

Oroes.

SETHAR, our nature is consistent ever !
Th' accursed Assur, whose detested hand
His royal brother slew, now on the throne
Plays through a wider scene his maniac part :
But we shall curb the monster in his wrath.

Sethar. Oh ! had you seen how ill-disguis'd
he spoke
With patriot gloss, till suddenly flam'd out
All his fell passions, malice, vengeance, hate,
The bigot's curses, and the tyrant's rage !
Where all is dark, 'tis needless to debate
What dreadful passion bears the darkest hue,
But nearest to his guilty heart is one
His glozing lies have ne'er conceal'd from me:
He hates Araxes.

Or. Hates Araxes, say you ?

Sethar. Is't not enough that a whole people
love him ?

That in his lineaments there shines, confess,
A murder'd brother's form?

Or. He honors him :
Gives him a titled name—a high command.
Sethar. 'Tis for his ruin, Oroes, he plans :
He deems the youth unequal to his post,
Or should he rise to fill the place assign'd him,
As he shall greatly fill a higher place
Of which this fell assassin little dreams,
Some traitor hand, amid the battle's tumult,
May do the deed beyond the reach of war.

Enter ARAXES in the back part of the stage; he descends a flight of steps, and approaches.

Or. The thought unstrings my aged knees—I faint—
Good heav'n, the prince!—that blessed sight revives me!

Sethar. Now, Oroes, be firm—summon the man :

You speak for justice—for a murder'd king.

Exit.

Oroes leans against a pillar—Araxes approaches.

Arax. My gracious father, shall I lead you forth

To breathe the balmy air—it is my office :
I am a wretched bankrupt in affection,
Paying, yet owing ever.

Or. Rest we here :

The presence of our gods—this sacred altar,
Befit the subject of our great discourse.

Arax. A sudden horror creeps through all
my veins,

And my hair stiffens with the strange sensation :
Oft have I stood the fierce battalia rang'd,
With serried spears, as from a moving wall,
Yes ! have I, in their hottest fury met them,
And lance to lance repell'd the stern attack :
Speak, father, speak—what is my history ?

Or. Already tremblest thou ? I have a tale
That breath'd into the wilderness, would raise
A general horror in the savage brute,
Give hated life to things inanimate,
And load the storm with terrors not it's own.

Arax. Resembling those that croud into my
soul :

Oh ! banish far this torturing suspense.

Or. You should have no petition but to
heav'n !

Arax. Be not yourself more cruel than your
promise.

Or. Araxes ! listen to your sacred sirc !
'Tis the last time I shall pronounce that word :
The rest is humble loyalty and faith :
You have been told, (the theme's in every
mouth)

How our late king, the most renowned Ninus,
Perish'd in blooming prime, ere yet the virtues,
That in his glorious nature teem'd so thick,
Gave their full harvest to applauding nations :

And you have heard how suddenly he fell;
 Beneath a power that strikes or young or old,
 And oft the youth, glorying in strength and
 hope,

Strews by the side of old decrepitude:
 Great Ninus fell indeed most suddenly,
 But 'twas not nature struck the fatal blow:

Arax. Ye heav'nly powers!

Or. What! nature, did I say?

Nature ran back affrighted, nature blush'd
 To own the deed within her vast creation:
 Nature that freely owns things most corrupted,
 Polluted, venomous—the serpent's poison
 Or tiger's treachery, at that act shudder'd,
 And forming Assur, fled from Assur's guilt.

Arax. What do I hear? Old man, beware of
 crime:

Think of his guilt that damns a monarch's fame:

Or. My only sovereign is the son of Ninus:

Arax. Where is that son, support me, mighty
 gods!

Or. A father's eyes ne'er doated on that son,
 And, scarcely had his mother's bosom felt
 The gentle pressure of his infant lips,
 When he was thrown upon the waste to die:
 Already had the poniard drunk his blood,
 When my arm interpos'd and sav'd the boy:
 Full on his breast the murd'rous blow was aim'd,
 And still a lengthen'd scar bespeaks the wound.

Arax. A scar full on the breast—prince, did
 you say?

His royal father plung'd in death untimely ?

Or. My sacred character the assassin aw'd,
Soft'ning his purpose but not changing it :
Not one his way to crime and his reward :
The sad alternative was the wild desart :
I trac'd the fiend in this his varied form
And sav'd again the outcast innocent :
The heedless mother who had scarcely seen
The royal babe, with due decorum mourn'd
That death suppos'd, which friends and foes
alike

Reported and confirm'd with tears or oaths :
All credulous to Assur's specious vows,
The son she wept, she cherishes unknown :
And fast he grew, and each revolving sun
Added a manly grace, till four years back,
His father's spirit rising to its height
Urg'd him to fight round Kedar's stubborn walls,
Where his high merit broke in glory forth,
And prov'd him worthy of the throne he owns.

Arax. Am I that prince ? Great Ninus' son ?

Or. I swear !

Son of the murder'd king of Babylon !

Arax. Vengeance and justice be my steps to
mount by !

Or. Listen, oh noble prince, and then resolve !
Strong in my memory is that last hour,
When I enjoy'd my sov'reign's confidence :
'Twas eve, and as his frequent manner was,
Late on the western terrace of his palace,

He held in conference his grateful servant :
 The lingering sun detain'd the parting day,
 It's splendor not yet lost, but lessen'd so,
 That mortal eye might fix with gaze undazzl'd :
 Above, around it, flakes of burning gold,
 With intervening streaks of glowing crimson,
 Array'd it's slow-descending majesty :
 Pardon, my lord, my weak garrulity,
 But other suns your father never saw,
 And oft in fancy's view the orb appears,
 Fit emblem of his mighty self—for much
 Of kingly sway and empire's cares he spoke,
 Of distant provinces, of trade, of arts,
 And broad-arm'd ports, where navy-forests ride.
 And ne'er, methought, though fam'd for elo-
 quence

And wise debate, did philosophic lore
 Mark his discourse with such mild dignity.
 That night your uncle—

Arax. Murd'rous damned villain !
 Curse of the earth—my soul is all in arms !
Or. Why, why delay to speak the hellish act ?
 Then stole your uncle on the monarch's sleep,
 And quench'd in showers of blood a kingdom's
 glory.

Arax. I'll strew him piece-meal on my father's
 grave,
 No secret hour shall hide *th'* avenging blow ;
 Through glaring noon I'll drag him to the spot,
 My sword shall riot in his guilty heart,
 And Babylon shout triumph in his groans.

Or. There soars the phœnix from its parent-grave,

Feather'd for fame immortal—noble prince.

Arax. Now is the moment—wheresoe'er he be,
In solemn council or at riotous feast,
Plotting or acting for a nation's curse,
E'en at his prayers, if the assassin prays,
This arm shall plunge him in his kindred hell.

Or. Ninus, beware ! a light, incautious step—

Arax. Caution is guilt—betrays my glorious claims :

Now, sacred justice, lead me to a throne :

going out.

Or. Stay—I conjure—what had you said,
rash prince,
If when you form'd the plan for Kedar's capture,
Some headlong youth, stung with the thoughts
of honor,
Had warn'd the foe by premature attacks,
And robb'd his country of the glorious prize ?

Arax. Away, old man :

Or. Then Babylon is lost :

And bloody Assur reigns triumphant still.

Arax. Gods—is it possible ?

Or. Your stake's a kingdom ;

Fret like a child, and lose a diadem :

Arax. Oh—holy father, 'tis on thee I rest,
Counsel the son of Ninus—he is your's :
But this I charge you, when the struggle rises,
Let Assur bleed beneath no blow but mine :

Or. Vengeance is your's, and 'tis to make it
sure,
I dare enjoin this caution to my king :
Sethar, advance and own your sovereign lord.

Enter SETHAR, who kneels to ARAXES.

Arax. My aged friend, for ever honor'd Se-
thar !

Sethar. Your faithful subject !

Or. Tried in evil days !

We must be brief, for fast the hour approaches,
When the gods call me to their holy service
In loud thanksgiving—form we now one plan,
And let no other object cross its way :
Sethar, behold our goal—our glorious mark :
Here is the point our toiling efforts search'd
Through long elaborate counsels deeply plann'd :
Be a determin'd act the great result :
Our restless struggles, with your recent fame,
And Assur's hated name, secure the people :
More than division hold our friends in council :
There at the foot of your eternal throne,
Polluted now, but still most glorious,
Our friends inspir'd by their great monarch's
presence,
Our foes, by virtues they disclaim, subdued,
There I'll proclaim the son of Nînus king :.

Sethar. Oh ! at the sound these hairs will
lose their snow,

Arax. And present miracles confirm the truth !

Arax. Then leave the rest to me : Howe'er
enthron'd

'Mid servile bands with murd'rous falchions
arm'd,

I'll mow my way, though gash'd with stream-
ing wounds,

And from his heart the tyrant pays his blood.

Or. Yet, prince, attend ! ere the dread hour
arrives

You must hold converse with the queen your
mother :

Purer than Assur in her high descent,
(No tyrant's power can cleanse his mingl'd race)
Greater than Assur in the people's love,
Much will depend on her acknowledgment,
Before th' assembl'd council : speak to her,
prince,

In language suiting the great cause we fight for :
A murder'd husband—an incestuous bed,
An orphan son, bereft of name and throne,
A country's curses, the avenging gods,
Be your great themes to storm her suff'ring con-
science :

Then when she labours with the weight of crime,
Let filial tears sink to her wounded heart,
And grant the blessing she refus'd to you.

Arax. To you the great vicegerent of the gods,

I bow submissive—Mother said you, Oroes ?
 'Tis an unwonted name ! down, down, my soul !
Or. Here break we off ! observe the sacred
 train !

A procession passes over the back part of the stage.

Arax. Is the fell tyrant there ?
Or. Remember, Prince !
 But one rash act, your friends, your life are
 lost,
 And bloody tyranny still curses earth. *Exit.*
Arax. Leave me, good Sethar ! I will follow
 you. *Exit Sethar.*

After a pause.

Ye gods, look down in mercy on mankind !
 Pour not your justice on a guilty world,
 For if ye hold th' eternal balance strict,
 You must cut off posterity,
 And make the earth an universal void :
 Offences clad in gold stalk through the earth,
 And gorgeous vice proclaims a wild misrule :
 The law itself is instrument of ill,
 Exacting penalties for petty crimes,
 While the thron'd murd'rer lifts his head un-
 daunted,
 Sav'd by the damning greatness of his guilt :
 Thus made for justice, are the laws unjust,
 And e'en the virtuous efforts of mankind
 But swell the general mass of guilt and ruin..

Enter KING and MERES.

King. Araxes here? In every place he crosses me,

Meres, you know not how I hate that youth:

Meres. But send him to the wars—if he return, E'en in your palace let him act his treasons.

King. Observe you his distracted mien? our plot

Holds well—these honors raise the boy to madness!

The people idolize a feather, trust me.

Meres. Their adorations should be fed with change.

King. My faithful Meres, oh were mighty kings

Serv'd as by you, an empire were a pastime:

Meres, draw near—tell me, thou loyal subject, Dost thou perceive a likeness in that youth

To any picture thou hast ever seen?

Meres. Picture, great king? not I—I've heard it said

He close resembles that of the late king:

I think not so—

King. Does he resemble this? (*Shewing a miniature.*)

Meres. You mock your slave: It is Araxes' self:

King. There strikes the thunderbolt—'tis right, right, Meres:

(Aside) The very picture Ninus gave my wife
On her first marriage.

Meres. Your majesty?

King. A sudden pang just shot across my
brow:

'Tis past: now may his king accost this man?
This creature of his favor? what, Araxes!
What means the insolent? to make no answer,
No sign of our high station, as we pass,
But rather glance a side-long frown upon us?
Araxes know you not? how now? in silence?

Arax. (*Not having perceived him.*) There is a
power above that searches hearts,
And when th' æthereal quintessence, the soul,
This all-pervading thought, this consciousness,
This acting, suffering sensibility,
This living principle, this very life,
Shall unimpeded by the body stand
Naked and bare, before that awful judge,
Superfluous will his dreadful sentence fall
On that quick essence, which must be all an-
guish,

If anguish is it's due, or joy if joy:
The sentence shall be heard for justice' sake
More than for punishment, on that poor being
That shivers with it's own deformity:
Then virtue in it's proper strength shall stand,
A robe more gorgeous than the regal purple,
Covering the frailty of our mortal nature.
Yet on the earth we must have justice too,

Or will this goodly frame burst from the ties
That hold it as 'twas made:

King. Break off, Araxes—

And mark who interrupts this homily:

Arax. Sir, I was dwelling on a heav'nly
theme,

And when the soul is full of meditation,
On points connected with a blest hereafter,
Or everlasting pain, it is not fit
To bow the knee to earthly pageantry.

King. We are your sovereign, boy!

Arax. I am—your subject:

Your pardon, mighty sir—this absent mood
Makes me forget my homage to my king:
Rich but in leisure, I was early taught
On fav'rite themes to commune with myself,
To make my solitary moments vocal,
And fondly imitate society.

'Twas my misfortune from my boyish years,
Or rather fault, had not just punishment
Already waited on a monarch's frown.

King. You are prepar'd for war! we shall
exalt you

To a command, shall give your talents scope:
No more the creature of a transient will,
No more dependent on a happy chance:
No petty squadron shall your valour lead
Against a half-made breach—now mighty walls
In vast circumference shall fall before you,
And all our forces march unbroken in:

Arax. Believe me, sire ! whene'er I meet the
foe
Of Babylon, my arm knows no repose:
King. Enough! prepare we your commission,
lord !
Then to the camp with all the speed you may.
Meres. And to return, great in the warrior's
fame,
'Mid the fond rapture of applauding nations.

Exeunt.

Arax. Not in the camp I meet my bitterest
foe,
Not there I find my country's deadliest scourge:
Guard me, just heav'n, with thy shelt'ring
care,
Protect me, holy Oroes, with thy counsel.

Exit.

SCENE II.—*The vestibule of the Temple.*

Enter MITRANES.

Mit. Ere this the great Araxes knows his fate:
Great ! 'tis a name pre-eminently his !
What feeling 'tis that binds me to this man,
By sacred ties no other friendship owns,
I know not—but were he my king confess,
Scarce could his virtues force a humbler homage.

Enter ARAXES from the interior of the Temple.

Mit. My friend!

Arax. The day is festival, Mitrane !

Assur is at his prayers—thanking the gods !

Mit. For your great actions, that augment
his power !

Arax. There is the cause, and in that cause,
Mitrane,

Whate'er is whisper'd in the general ear,
I find myself a traitor to my king.

Mit. How ?

Arax. Holy father Oroes said, beware :
I will beware : yet is't not strange, Mitrane,
Nature and fortune should so ill agree,
That no distinction marks out man from man,
But by these wretched baubles ?—(*pointing to*
his order of nobility) nay, it happens,
The two blind goddesses shall act inversely,
And hence the peasant rise above the lord :
Nor should we wonder, when a monarch's son,
Himself, by right indisputable, king,
Walks his own capital, unknown, unhonor'd,
Receiving daily news from rude mechanics.

Mit. You speak enigmas ! oh ! be plain with
me !

Araxes, we have liv'd and fought together,
And when you rag'd upon the edge of war,
On the extremest verge on this side death,
Though distantly, yet next, I track'd your
course :

You are not weary of your warrior friend.

Arax. Trust me, I would not mock you, fellow soldier,*

And you shall find, if ever circumstance
(As fortune seems to take me by the hand,) Should bless me with the power to serve a friend,
You have not follow'd me in dangers only.
These public walls have ears—or I could tell you,
Oh ! of such deeds, so bloody, pitiless,
That the worst chance of war is mercy to them :
We must be secret—till the hour of vengeance !
No—no—not here—Assur is at his prayers !

Exeunt.

* "I pray thee do not mock me, fellow student." (*Hamlet.*)

On a subject which Shakespeare has chosen for a play, which, if it is deformed with as many defects as any of his productions, is also perhaps adorned with more beauties, than any, it is impossible at all times to resist the pleasure of falling into his modes of expression. Indeed this submission, which confesses at once my admiration and my despair, is the only apology I can make to his memory for presuming to choose a subject resembling one of his.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the Palace.*

KING, QUEEN, AZEMA, ZAPHAN, SETHAR.

King.

HAVE the ambassadors of hated Judah
Carried our message home?

Zaph. They wait, dread king,
Your last resolve, still ling'ring with the hope
Some after-counsels may incline to peace.

King. They have my last resolve: or war, or
tribute:
All after-counsels but inflame my hate.
But as they stay with some pacific prospect,
Be a new idol in our temple plac'd,
And swift proclaim our mandate through the
city,

That all the pris'ners taken in our wars,
Of ev'ry nation, bow and worship it.
Should but a man refuse, then heat the furnace,
And throw the stubborn visionary in.

Az. Yet cast an eye of pity on the weak,
Who press'd by dangers, still uphold their faith,
Sustain'd how long, through tedious sufferings,

Through ways untrod before, 'mid chains and exile.

King. Azema, peace! nor prove unfit for empire.

When they narrate our friendly resolutions,
This fact will give new vigour to their words:
We have no psalmist kings, but we adore,
With fervor great as their's, our country's gods.

Zaph. Your will shall be obey'd.

King. Observe it, Zaphan. *Exit Zaph.*
(To the Queen.) See, madam, how our empire gathers strength!

Judea's messengers must speed their way,
Or will our armies overtake their steps,
And their proud capital, Jerusalem,
Salute their coming with its prostrate walls.

Queen. Under the guidance of the lord Araxes,
No prodigies that youthful valour owns,
May not illustrate and increase our power.

King. Araxes still? I loathe the very name:
And while our valiant armies daily stretch
Our iron frontier past it's usual bound,
The people's loyalty our fortune equals. (*looking at Sethar.*)

Seth. The kingly name, dread sir, is ever honored!

Tyrant! that name is prostituted now. (*Aside.*)

King. To-morrow fix we for our glorious triumph.

Seth. Triumph indeed! and thou shalt bear thy part. (*Aside.*)

King. Enthron'd in radiant car we draw the
homage

Of rapturous Babylon, while in long train,
Kings, princes, governors, with heads bow'd low,
And hearts that almost bleed before our eyes,
In chains at least, that make their bodies shrink,
Shall form the glorious contrast of the day.

(*To Sethar, going out.*) Sethar, observe! look,
you be there, old man,
Or those gray hairs shall not protect their
master.

Seth. I will be present at the triumph—sire.

Exit.

Enter MERES.

King. Now, Meres, what? your swift impa-
tience seems
To chide your steps as tardy in our service.
Meres. Most gracious sovereign, and you,
great queen,
Credit the warning of your faithful servant.
All is not well, nor safe in Babylon.

King. Treason at work? then, on my life,
old Sethar
Is no weak plotter of the daring mischief.

Meres. Oroes—my forward zeal offends my
queen.

Queen. My sacred friend! and guardian of
Araxes?

Beware, my lord, his country owes him thanks.

King. Th' anointed servant of our holy faith,
Or he had fed the lions long ago.

(*Aside.*) For if I did not fear him, I should
hate him,

First for the cause that thus obtains respect.

Say on, right trusty Meres.

Meres. Though the grounds
Of my suspicions shrink from evidence,
Yet on my life there's treason in the state,
Aye, in the council, of no common size :
Mark'd you how, 'mid the day's most holy ser-
vice,

E'en in the temple, men look'd vacant round,
Nor fix'd one look on sacred majesty :
Then when Mitrances enter'd, how they press'd
To ask why lord Araxes was not there ?

King. I do remember some strange whispering.

Meres. Methought some demon clogg'd the
sacred hymn,

As it ascended with it's proud thanksgiving.

Then in the city all is out of course ;

The dull mechanic pauses as he walks,

Fixes his filthy finger on his forehead,

And after deep laborious meditation,

Proceeds, the fate of Babylon decided :

In every street, wherever place is found

Convenient for dispute, some four or five

Collect, and probe each other for a meaning :

One scarcely moves, as if he could not carry

The mighty secret he is charg'd withal :

Another shoots before the aching eye,
 As if his life was stak'd upon a moment:
 Just now as I approach'd the palace gate,
 A blacksmith pointed to these glorious towers,
 Then looking at the skies, pronounc'd, Araxes !

King. Eternal curses fall upon his head !
 The hated name's a death-blow to my ears :
 Take the commission we have now prepar'd,
 And tell him too the mandate of his king,
 That if an hour from this we hear of him
 Within the precincts of our capital,
 His life is forfeit—execute our will.

Az. Oh thou that guard'st the brave—protect
 him, heav'n !

Meres. Ever the happy slave of your good
 pleasure !

King. And let our soothsayers and astrologers
 Be summon'd quick, to ascertain and say
 What is the secret cause of our alarm :
 If they should waver in the great account,
 Or fail in giving us one point minute,
 Each word they utter shall but prophecy
 Their own destruction :* now, *Meres*, away !

Exit Meres.

Semiramis, our crown, that twice ten suns

* However extravagant this language may appear, it is perfectly weak and moderate, when compared with that which the kings of Babylon are recorded in the scriptures to have really used on similar occasions.

Have now illum'd, giving and borrowing splendor,

Stands on a cold and barren eminence,
And sheds no ray upon the time to come :
Since our lov'd brother's e'er lamented death,
And your dear boy's, whose cradle was his grave,
(Alas that such sweet innocence should die)

The race of Ninus perishes in us,
Or finds alone collateral support :
Azema, hear'st thou how on thee depends
What yet remains of all thy country love ?

Az. My thoughts have seldom dar'd to stray
so far

As to embrace the interests of a people.

King. Would it were needless !

Queen. Are you then amaz'd
That such alarming signs should shake the city
As Meres speaks, when the first barriers
Break the full course of that unnumber'd race,
Whose glory and their country's have been one ?
When you can boast but half the Ninian blood,
And many distant stains pollute Azema's ?
Oh, my dear boy, whose cradl'd beauty gave
Such hopes of all a nation might adore—

King. (Aside.) She loves this pretty jargon !
self-deceiv'd,

Weak, shallow woman ! sooth, 'twas pitiful !

Queen. Hadst thou been present, thou hadst
fought our battles,
And e'en Araxes' glory sunk in thine !

King. We'll try to find an easier mode, good madam,

To bring this upstart to his proper level :
 Be it, howe'er, our most imperious aim,
 To seek an heir that shall support the throne
 As Ninus' sun descends—and you, Azema,
 Shall find the great result of all our care
 In a most noble husband : these affairs
 Are fitter for the council than the closet :
 For this sole object are our nobles summon'd,
 That when the proud inheritance is fix'd,
 Ambitious thoughts may perish in despair :
 There we shall meet our ever loyal queen.

Exit.

Queen. Now comes the hour by Oroses appointed

For me to hold in secret conference
 This young, this lov'd, this noble, brave Araxes :
 This hapless outcast—idol of his country,
 Child of my bounty—whom the world adore,
 This peasant slave—the image of great Ninus.
 He has I find some secrets to disclose
 That point directly at my throne and peace :
 My heart, I trust, will not play reckless truant,
 And teach me to betray both throne and peace.

Az. Oh ! that my spirits could mount high as
 your's !

But not my brilliant expectations save me
 From grief contrasted with my rank, how
 strangely !

And ev'ry smile I would assume is false.

Queen. Think of the council's purpose, sweet
Azema,

'Tis to confirm thy reign by added strength :

Follow the world and smile upon Araxes.

Had he but rank—come, smile, Azema, smile.

Exeunt.

SCENE III.—*A Hall in the Palace, with statues ranged along it.*

Enter ARAXES.

Arax. Here is my way : why should I tremble thus ?

I go to plead with a maternal judge
A cause to melt the very earth to pity :
This palace is mine own, where high enthron'd,
In royal state, my mighty fathers rul'd
The eastern world, beyond man's memory :
These images would give us back the dead,
And in their faint and ineffectual lines
Pourtray the warrior's fire : why should I fear ?
Here is my dwelling, for the people say
I cast no shame upon a race of heroes :
Who was the last—I've seen him in the tomb,*

* The Babylonian customs of sepulture were the same as those of the Egyptians, by which the body was preserved a long time.

And twenty years have not effac'd the wound
 That hurried him untimely to his grave,
 Struck by the hand accurs'd that wields his
 sceptre :

Were I the slave I am imagin'd here,
 (Here in this palace mine by right undoubted)
 The upstart creature of an envied rank,
 Beggar of favors given in derision,
 The hellish deed confirm'd as I have seen it,
 Would urge me to gratuitous revenge.
 But now—the son—

Enter MERES and ZAPHAN.

Meres. Well met, my lord Araxes !

Arax. Ha ! excellently well : in the first pa-
 lace

The world owns, sir : your smiling courtiers,
 Your dazzling ladies : soldiers, lawyers, scholars,
 Wise men, magicians, and astrologers,
 Your governors of provinces that come
 Each year to learn our better manners here,
 And then return to shew our worst at home ;
 Your officers of state that slander tells
 Will unsay all they ever said for place,
 And saving principle will alter conduct,
 Or changing both laugh out poor honesty ;
 Your hypocrites, with conscience on their lips,
 The only place their conscience ever held,
 Who make the gods their instruments of power,

Moral in words, most blasphemous in acts,
The hoary slave whose knees are grown so sup-
ple,

That you would think him half-way in his grave,
The youth whose stiffer joints acquire the trick
That sets his frame at variance with his hairs,
Your minister, your beau, gallant and sage
Are here well met.

Meres. The satire's keen, my lord !

Arax. Satire ? no, good my lords ! 'twere
black injustice !

I would not for a town pronounce a satire :
'Twere better—lords—to face embattl'd hosts.

Meres. Such an employment we are come to
give you !

We bring you orders from our lord the king.

Arax. Well met indeed ! I pray, declare them
quick :

The words of kings are fire, and must not cool
Through messengers' delay !

Meres. (To Zaphan) Is he not mad ?

Zaphan—most gloriously mad ?

Zaph. Doubt it not.

There is no need to send him to the wars,
But swell his sails in port, he sinks at home.

Arax. My lords ! I wait your message.

Meres. Thus it is.

I bring you the commission that appoints you
To a command beyond your warmest hopes,
And with it this most absolute behest :
That you leave Babylon e'en on the instant.

If from this time an hour, you shall be found
 Within our walls, your fault must be aton'd
 By nothing less than death : my valiant lord,
 And most renowned general, think of this.

Zaph. Our second message may be somewhat
 ruder.

Arax. My lords, give me one moment—

Zaph. Pray be quick :
 'Tis for yourself we counsel you, my lord,
 You have but little time to take the field.

Arax. You bear this message with excessive
 joy :

What is the dreadful evil you avoid,
 When I am braving the rude storm of war ?
 How is my presence fatal to your peace ?
 My memory recalls no moment past,
 In which I offer'd you the slightest wrong.

Meres. We came not here to answer but com-
 mand :

We were not born to measure out our words
 Like the poor orphan who depends on bounty.

Arax. Yet to one question I intreat your an-
 swer :

What, think you, he deserves, who face to face,
 E'en in his palace dare insult his king.

Zaph. Death in unheard-of tortures !

Meres. Worse than tortures !

Arax. I thank you—think of this—now fare
 you well :

Zaph. 'Tis well we thus escape the madman's
 rage.

Exeunt.

Arax. Go ! wretched tools of a detested tyrant,
 I know you well—yet shall your meanness save you !
 And you shall find the monarch knows no wrongs
 But those he suffers when he is a monarch.

Exit.

SCENE IV.—*An Apartment in the Palace.*

The QUEEN alone.

Queen. Where is the youth, whose mighty conquests fall
 From captur'd towns, to bind the soul in chains ?
 If hostile armies tremble at his name,
 Shall the poor kingdom of the heart escape ?
 Assur is hated—I have never lov'd him :
 Empire I lov'd, and I became his wife
 To guard the blood of Ninus' race unsullied,
 But my first husband wore—

Enter ARAXES.

That noble form.

Arax. Madam, partaker of the noblest blood,
 Its source unknown—in sooth a four year's war
 Has so unfitted me for ladies' presence,

That my words fail as I address my queen,
And send me back a bankrupt in decorum.

Queen. A hero's manners lead, not follow
fashion;

Where'er he goes, his fame prepares his way,
And the weak forms of court are only left
To serve the fools who have no better claim.

Arax. I do rejoice to hear you speak of
claims:

I have a claim to seize the coldest breast,
Fix'd deep in nature's great primeval law.

Queen. Oroes has school'd you, sir, in words
sublime,

And the rude camp has fix'd his lessons deep :
But we will teach you softer words at court.

Arax. The war I wage is not in camp alone,
It rests not on the fury of the sword.

Queen. Then let your words be softer than of
war,
And change the storm for wooing zephyr's
breath.

Arax. Madam, alas ! I never learnt the art
To tread with care the winding path of pru-
dence,

Or slowly calculate on consequences :
Set me a glorious point before my eyes
And I must grasp it as within my reach,
Though, grasping, fall—it is the soldier's part.

Queen. 'Tis not the soldier's part, my lord, to
fear ;
Trust me, th' affections are of pliant nature,

And mostly follow him whom fame elates :
The valiant deed pleads best for woman's love.

Arax. 'Tis nature's voice pleads best for nature's law.

Queen. I will not play with you the reasoner's game,

Nor aim to win the prize the learned offer :
And will Araxes change the camp for school ?

Arax. I change the camp, that cradle of my fame,

The crested plume, imagination raises
To wave high-tow'ring in a people's eyes,
The choral strain, that fir'd my youthful breast,
And marshall'd to my busy memory
All the great actions I had heard or read of ;
The soldier's confidence, my darling hope,
The monarch's most imperious command,
These vanish far, nor leave a trace to balance,
The dread importance of this sacred hour.

Queen. You take the heart as you would take a town,

And troops of armed words come thund'ring in :
I love not Assur : were no cause but this,
I should detest him, for he hates Araxes.

Arax. Yet Assur is your husband :

Queen. So was Ninus :

Nor has my early love e'er left his tomb,
To warm the nuptials of a second husband :
The marriage vow was to the sceptre made,
Too like that sceptre, splendid, heartless, cold.

Arax. Your taste thus vindicated, pass we on

To try how far its force directs your actions :
 For when I hear the voice of fame forbid
 E'en to compare the living and the dead,
 I will not think, you boast an idle feeling,
 A gaudy sentiment, admir'd and useless.

Queen. You urge right earnestly a fruitless suit :
 Yet for the dead you should not sue in frowns.

Arax. Oh that much better might a tear be-
 come

That royal grave—that all dissolv'd in woe,
 I might but share the popular regret !

Queen. What then—Araxes ! shall we mourn
 together

O'er the lost Ninus ? tell how, had he liv'd,
 His virtues would have gather'd in the world ?
 Will not the tale repeated tedious grow ?
 Where tends this grief but to consume the
 mourner ?

We pay our lives and bring no value back :
 The present moment is the wise man's care,
 For present moments make the whole of life :
 See what dexterity you give a woman,
 To win affection by fair argument :
 Come—leave this melancholy theme—my lord !
 This sad eternity of helpless sorrow !
 I cannot argue nor weep on for ever :
 I think of Ninus with true loyalty :
 I could love Ninus were he living still,
 And him most like to Ninus I will love.

Arax. Now raise thy storms and hurl thy
 thunder, heav'n !

Queen. What does the wild insensate mean or dare ?

Arax. Too wretched woman ! hear me what I mean !

Too hapless mother ! hear me who I am.

Queen. What is the sound that thus comes forth in terror ?

What is the name I must not hear and live ?

Arax. Ninus was murder'd—I am Ninus' son.

Queen. Ninus murder'd, say'st thou ?

Arax. In sleep profound,

The blessed consequence of virtuous toil,

And thoughts at peace with heav'n, (almighty gods !

Why did ye not arrest the coward hand ?)

My royal father pour'd his life-blood forth

To an assassin's blow :

Queen. My thoughts perplex'd

Run back through endless circumstance and find

Th' accursed story true : support me, heaven !

Arax. Think'st thou, oh queen ! that nature made no pause

Between the solemn duties of a king,

As Ninus acted them, in camp or senate,

And the cold grave ? think'st thou he fell at once,

From the meridian glory of his manhood,

Like the false meteor, to be seen no more,

Under the guidance of immortal powers ?

That no infernal monster cross'd his path,

And from his honors struck him out for ever?
 Yet if you doubt, a fearful proof remains.
 When petty villains strike for paltry aims,
 The blow unsure is rumour'd and forgotten,
 But when a throne's the prize, not lengthen'd
 time,

Not e'en the grave can quite efface the wound.

Queen. Assur!

Arax. He tore my father's royal robe,
 Robb'd him of life and still pollutes his throne,
 He drove his son to perish in the waste,
 He stains his bed that he has won by blood.

Queen. Spare me, oh spare—deceiving and
 deceiv'd.

Arax. Hence the just gods afflict the hearts
 of men

With mighty fears and dreadful prodigies:
 Hence the portents that make the brave man
 tremble,

Spreading the monarch's crime o'er all the land.

Queen. My son!

Arax. But then to speed with most unhal-
 low'd haste

From that blest bed where you had given a
 pledge

Of holy love! though your “espoused saint”
 The pledge you gave could not receive on earth!
 Madly to rush into his murderer's arms,
 The sweet memorial from your heart erase,
 And press the lips curs'd with the fell command
 That tore the infant innocence away,

To hang upon the reeking fratricide,
 And make the worst of murders more deform'd
 By an incestuous prize : shall crimes like these
 Be unaton'd by penitence or deeds ?

Queen. Listen—oh Ninus—name for ever lov'd !

Arax. Will you persist in that detested course
 Fated to lead to the dread penalties
 Prepar'd for those who swear a virtuous love,
 Yet break their vows or impiously transfer them
 To him whose poniard cut the sacred tie ?

Queen. Speak—speak no more : I hate myself
 and him :

'Tis you alone I love :

Arax. Pause, pause, my mother :
 So fatally deceiv'd suspect yourself :
 Spurn Assur from you and avenge great Ninus,
 Rise in the council and avow his son :
 My steps are watch'd and I must haste away ;
 The hly father will supply my place
 With proofs how far beyond the reach of doubt !
 Remember the great race from which you
 spring,
 How great her glory, who was wife of Ninus,
 Summon your virtue and redeem your fame,
 The wife and mother of a rightful king.

Queen. Awak'd by you, my long-lost love
 revives ;
 For Ninus lives all perfect in his son.

Arax. Chastise the risings of a hasty passion.
 And let the mother give her son his throne :
 The tyrant holds his sceptre but by you ;

In the great effort sinking ev'ry feeling,
 Transfer that sceptre to the son of Ninus :
 Then at your feet he'll humbly bow before you,
 And filial tears reward a mother's blessing.

Going out.

Queen. Stay—stay—nor leave me thus in solitude ;
 Victim of love, and anguish, and remorse.

Arax. I leave you to prepare for that one act,
 The sole atonement you can make to heav'n.

Exit.

Queen. No son art thou, who cheat'st my fond affection
 And spurn'st thy bleeding mother from thy heart :
 True—'twas the desert waste where thou wast nurtur'd,
 'Mid savage beasts less savage than thyself :
 Yes—I will meet you at the council, boy,
 And prove I can avenge the wrongs I suffer.

Exit,

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

**SCENE I.—*The Temple—the Tomb of NINUS—
SETHAR, MITRANES, ARAXES.***

Araxes.

THE very air breathes confidence, my friends,
Our country's gods are active in our cause,
And in these holy precincts, where they dwell,
Around this sacred tomb, which they protect,
Visions of glory pass before my eyes,
Crowning the son who burns t'avenge his sire,
And the tried friends who bless that son's
attempts.

Mit. Perish the traitor-voice that speaks for
Assur !

Oh that you met him in the field, my lord,
He would acknowledge there the arm of Ninus,
And yield a humble homage to it's strength.

Arax. Feel it he will, Mitrane, be assur'd :
Where his detested life draws vital food,
There will he own it :

Mit. Oh ! may I be there !
For I have seen you strike your country's foes !

Arax. But not, Mitrane, to avenge a father,

Not for a throne, not for a people's rights :
 Shade of my father, hover round thy son,
 Fix thy eternal diadem upon him,
 Then if thou pleasest, take him to thyself !
 Though victim, vanquisher ; though dying,
 crown'd,
 E'en on the grave's dark verge, give me that
 moment,
 The next be thine !

Sethar. Accept the old man's prayer,
 Immortal gods ! 'tis all the old man can :
 Ere this grey head rests on it's kindred earth,
 Oh ! let it bow in humble gratulations
 To the thron'd son of Ninus : worthy is he
 To sway your blessed sceptre on the earth,
 And exercise the rights you gave his fathers.

Enter OROES.

Or. Mourn, mourn, oh friends ! our great
 designs are lost :
 Assur still reigns and Babylon is gone.
Arax. Where is the tyrant ? where the hated
 fiend ?
Mit. Now, sword, perform thy duty for thy
 king.
Or. The queen refuses to avow you, prince,
 She has no long arrears to pay her son,
 For name, for throne, for Babylon bereft,
 Her son, the son of Ninus, she rejects,
 And murd'rous Assur still insults mankind.

Sethar. Ye heav'ly powers, when mighty
Ninus fell

Were all the ties of nature broke at once ?

Is there no law on earth ?

Mit. But in the sword.

Sethar. Speak, holy father, how resolv'd the
queen ?

Or. Just as you (*to Ninus*) left her, I gain'd
audience :

Not sorrowful or desolate I found her,
Not stung with keen remorse for errors past
Or sacred duties scorn'd : but anger heav'd
Her swelling breast and sparkl'd from her eyes :
As I approach'd, her rising rage subsided,
And darkly o'er her brooded sullen gloom :
I spoke of you, I spoke of Ninus' glory,
Of Assur's guilt—I gave her proofs unnumber'd
That made my words irrefragably true :
And once methought a tear stole down her
cheek,
As through the past pierc'd one reflecting
glance,
That brought to her torn heart a world of woes :
I nam'd our sacred purpose in the council,
At least the part that she was call'd to act :
No answer seconded our dearest hopes,
But half in tears and half in anger still,
She wav'd me from her : thus I left her, prince.

Arax. Leave her to nature's holy influence :
My proud appeal before th' assembl'd council,
Shall find it's way : howe'er, what matters it ?

My sword will find it's way :

Mit. Our friends are sure :

The very guards are our's or undecided.

Sethar. Enough of confidence ! each moment
teems

With some event that bears upon our purpose :

Suspicions ever the fell tyrant's food

Croud into Assur's soul and urge our action :

We must proceed unalterably on :

Oroes, still seek the queen : and you, Mitrances,

Inflame the soldiers with the thoughts of Kedar ;

My friends are busy and require fresh counsel :

See what a privilege old age bestows :

And thou, oh prince, whom sovereign nature
form'd

Equal to that high destiny, decreed thee,

Th' avenger of a crime beyond the law

And every other arm, let prudence guide thee !

Arax. We meet in council :

Mit. Honor'd prince, farewell !

Arax. Araxes, rather say—the name sounds
well

In those rude lips that must not learn to flatter :

My honor'd friend, farewell : give me your hand :

And, Sethar, you, whose ancient virtue shames

A wretched age, where high example pleads

For ev'ry crime—and you, most holy father,

Father indeed to a poor orphan youth,

Who knew no other guide but you and heav'n,

Farewell, farewell—receive my humble thanks :

The thanks, it may be, of a dying man ;

The thanks, it may be, of a conqu'ring prince ;
 Who owes his fame, his throne, his life to you :
 Oh should the poor Araxes sink unhonor'd,
 His deepest woe will be that you may fall
 Involv'd with him in ruin : should you live,
 Be his best epitaph your silent love !
 Now to you all, farewell ! the gods protect you !

Exeunt.

SCENE II.—*The outside of the Temple.*

KING and MERES.

King. Not yet obey'd ? a private conference ?
 Semiramis disorder'd and inflam'd ?
 And frequent meetings with these hoary
 traitors,
 Whom my weak brother, trusting all men,
 lov'd ? *Aside.*

We must not wait the dull event of war :
 We must strike quicker :

Meres. As you speak, 'tis done.

King. And surely, Meres ?

Meres. Could you see, dread king,
 The men selected to perform your wishes,
 Not your's alone but those of all your court,
 (Who but must hate this traitorous ingrate ?)
 You would not doubt the vigour of the blow.

King. Now would the weak and noisy multitude,

Did the stiff rebel bleed before their eyes,
By the formalities of justice crush'd,
As well he might, you know, my faithful Meres,
Call the act tyranny : but you relieve
Your monarch's heart that else might ever waver
Between the love of justice and his people.

Meres. You serve your people, though against
their will :
And mark, dread sire, your faithful instruments :

Enter Two ASSASSINS in the back-ground.

Araxes is in the temple : but these fellows
Will see no holy safeguard cast around him,
As he comes thence : do they look tremblers,
sire ?

King. I would not have him slain just in the
temple.

Meres. Here, good my lord, there's room
enough to die.

King. But they'll be quick ! for should the
people see
Th' attempt, and that attempt imperfect,
Meres—

Meres. Observe them once again : will they
be tardy ?
Do their eyes wink, as if when blood allures
them,

'They seize their prey irresolutely, sire?

King. And then the lifeless body, Meres,
where?

Meres. Now, in the temple there's a new-made
grave,

The ousted tenant will not quarrel, sire,

To find his mansion occupied :

King. Be it so!

But hark ! didst thou not hear the temple door
Grate on its hinges, sounding harshly, Meres ?

Leave me a-while—

Exit Meres.

Ninus was buried there,

And if these hir'd assassins strike as surely
As he who gain'd an empire by the blow,
His youthful image follows as his shade :
The son of Ninus perish'd by the poniard :
A cradl'd babe—the people knew him not :
Who doubts the fact ? does the queen call him
son ?

The people king ? the soldiers heir to empire ?

Strikes he in vengeance for a father's death ?

Who lives to tell him I my brother slew ?

Yet is he like my brother—all men think so,

And in the thought some plot for my destruc-
tion :

Detested fools ! that see me on a throne,

And half suspect the means that plac'd me there,

Yet think that now my coward arm will shrink,

And not uphold the mighty prize it gain'd !

That sound again ! the sacred portal opes : .

Curse on my fears ! now do thy work, fell
murder !

Exit.

The Temple door opens : ARAXES appears upon the landing of a flight of steps leading from it : the ASSASSINS lurk on one side of the building.

Arax. A little while, my soul, and thy great purpose,

From heav'n descended, and by heav'n directed,
That fills thee to the height with life and light,
And crowns the transient date of mortal span,
With an immortal prize : that glorious fame
Through dangers won, when justice guides the arm

To vengeance for a father and a king ;

A little while and the great act is done.

1st Ass. Now is the moment—strike, but strike boldly.

2nd Ass. Aye, and deeply :

1st Ass. When anger rouses him,

They say 'twere better face the host of hell.

2nd Ass. Give him no time to turn then—strike.

Arax. I've bled for thee, my country, in the battle,

Nor will I shame the soldier's fame at home.

Exit.

1st Ass. I never did my work so ill before :
He does not look as he were made to die.

2nd Ass. Then follow me ! thou pale half-murderer !

Exeunt.

A noise is heard from behind the scenes as of men fighting, followed by a groan as of one dying. Then, enter FIRST ASSASSIN and ARAXES fighting—ARAXES disarms him.

1st Ass. Mercy, mercy, mercy ! grant me but life,

I am your slave, your abject slave for ever !

Arax. Abject indeed ! I will not slay thee, man,

But weep there should exist in Babylon,

One that could raise his hand against my life :

Who and what art thou ? whence is this attempt ?

1st Ass. Who am I ? one, my lord, by suf-f'ring broken,

Who knew remorse for pardonable faults,

Till an indignant world hunted him down,

No diff'rence making 'twixt offence and crime :

One against whom the ways are ever clos'd

Of honest livelihood : by hunger tortur'd,

By conscience more, till rous'd to madness fell,

The wretch could not withstand the glittering bribe,

That would reward thy death :

Arax. Away—then ! haste !

Receive thy bribe : report Araxes dead ;

I would not ask thee to betray thy master:
 Take thou this ring: it will confirm thy story:
 Shouldst thou in future hear proclaim'd the
 wearer,

Boldly attend the call: now haste away!
 And the poor wretch, thou aidedst in his crimes,
 Who there lies dead, give him a burial.

Away, away:

Ass. He's something more than mortal. *Exit.*

Arax. To punish petty crimes is not my fate,
 Nor is it fitting for a monarch's son,
 His throne usurp'd, his royal father slain,
 The fiend still living who achiev'd the crime,
 To act the common executioner
 For trifles such as these: the princess here?

Enter AZEMA.

Sweet flower that throw'st thy fragrance far and
 wide,
 'Mid pois'nous weeds and "death-distilling
 fruit!"

Az. You bleed, my lord! Oh! let me bind
 the wound:
 What dreadful accident sheds blood so dear
 To Babylon?

Arax. A soldier from the wars, report calls
 rich,
 And the starv'd robber deems us noble booty;
 But I must thank the villains for a blow,

O'er which the princess mourns.

Az. Think you our state
Shuts out all feeling for another's pain ?
You look as you would search the secret deep.
Arax. Could unexampl'd crimes be e'er re-deem'd,

Without their forfeit, here they were forgiven !

Az. My lord !
Arax. Or if to be the guardian
Of innocence, in cherub beauty rob'd,
A bright example, could extinguish guilt,
Or change it's consequence, then were he spot-less,

And his black life of snow-white purity.

Az. Azema once receiv'd Araxes' homage.
Arax. Oh ! with a radiant angel ever plac'd
Before his eyes, soft'ning all excellence,
All virtue shewing in a form, how lovely !
What dreadful proof against our nature is it,
That he should bear the burden of his guilt,
And not beneath it sink annihilated !

Az. Truly, my lord, these wand'ring speeches
seem
To justify the charge I've lately heard
Against Araxes brought, that his great fame,
So lately won, has caus'd him to forget
His former friends, and those he once profess'd
To adore—light summer-vows too well believ'd !

Arax. Forgive me, gracious princess ! oh,
Azema,
(I cannot now play courtier with my lips,

And teach them formal phrase and hollow language)

If in the course of my eventful life,
Some deed of mine should tear your heart with
anguish,

And furrow deep that angel cheek with tears,
In it's performance should I sink in death,
And one grave hide my foes and me for ever,
Thinking that as he rose to sacred duty,
Azema only could afflict his spirit,
Oh! will you pause ere you pronounce in anger,
And from you spurn the memory of Araxes?
He cannot sure commingle with the dust
So utterly, as not to feel that frown!

Az. Can then Araxes think that o'er his grave
The lost Azema could feel aught but sorrow?
She that has trembl'd for remotest dangers,
And as each messenger arriv'd from camp,
Where he perform'd the high heroic deed,
Hung on the words that brought her life or
death?

Arax. Or if the effort should be crown'd with
fortune,

And the great gods should vindicate the right
By guarding him, whose awful destiny
That right has blended with a mighty name,
(A name, Azema, you alike may boast)
Will you so firmly fix your eye on justice
That your affections still shall bless his hopes,
And share a diadem, that thus unshar'd,
Would lose it's lustre in the wearer's eyes?

Az. Alas! my lord! these high and sounding words,

These fearful mysteries, can wake but fear
In a poor woman's breast—you once was plain.

Arax. You are prepar'd for holy duties, princess;

The council's purpose is to name an heir
For our vast empire—will you pray, Azema,
That rightful heirs alone may wield the sceptre?

Az. That were to offer for myself a prayer.

Arax. Go! pray then for thyself—and for thy king. *Exit.*

Az. And for Araxes—may the blessed gods incline great Assur to adopt him heir,
Whom, though in birth obscure, the world adores. *Exit into the Temple.*

SCENE III.—*The Council Chamber.*

The throne surrounded by guards, courtiers—SE-THAR, MITRANES, OROES, on one side—ZAPHAN and Lords on the other.

Enter KING, QUEEN, MERES.

King. (*To Meres*) That ring confirms the deed beyond a doubt.

Meres. He had not lost it, but in death, great king.

*The KING and QUEEN ascend the Throne—
MERES joins ZAPHAN.*

Oroes. (*To Sethar*) Araxes absent? whence is this delay?

King. Lords, princes, governors, that here assemble

In low obedience to our great commands,
 To learn our pleasure, and abide our will,
 Know we relax so far our sov'reign power,
 That on a theme which nothing less involves
 Than the appointment of our successor,
 Heir to an empire, whose increasing bounds
 Mock the fierce bowmen of the Scythian horde,
 Or sweeping southward through derided Judah,
 O'erpass the sea, her lying records say
 Open'd it's waves to let her sons march dry,
 And clos'd them o'er the Egyptian and his troop,
 Submissive now whate'er we load it with,
 Though full as hostile as old Pharaoh was,
 We somewhat now remit our sovereignty
 And ask your counsel, lords: ourselves have
 mourn'd,
 That the great throne of Ninus should be stain'd
 With foreign blood, yet did our honor'd mother,
 Who bore us but to share the high descent,
 And in the moment perish'd, as for shame
 Her son's inheritance should be polluted,

Our mother struggl'd with no vulgar rank :
 A younger born, more happily deriv'd,
 His race unmix'd, and wedded to preserve it,

(turning to the Queen.)

Mounted the throne upon our father's death,
 In name, in blood, the undisputed heir :
 He follow'd to the grave, by all lamented,
 And with him died his son, a sickly babe,
 Yet as our nephew, lov'd ! then no resource,
 Save to enthrone ourselves, the council found,
 And our great queen confirmed that council's
 purpose :

Alas ! as years increase, the evil grows,
 For now a branch, collateral, impure,
 In a weak woman ending, sole remains :
 Her we have cherish'd, lords, with guardian
 care,

With watchful zeal, and now thus summon you
 T' elect the partner of her future throne :
 Meres, advance ! your ancestors run high,
 And we have found you a most loyal subject :
 Sethar, we give precedence to your age,
 In claiming the opinions of our nobles :
 Speak then.

Sethar. Great king, I rise in diffidence :
 Ye heav'nly powers ! where stays the son of
 Ninus ?

Meres. Can Sethar's lips distil no eloquence,
 But when a younger lord supports his words ? .

King. Oroes, speak you ! for Sethar fails in
 speech,

Though wont to use the old man's privilege.

Oroes. Dread sir, the question is of awful moment,

And many hours in private meditation
Requires, ere I can publish the result.

King. Whence this confusion, lords? from
you, or you,

Who oft have past whole hours in conference,
And spun the web of argument so fine
With airy, crossing, gossamery lines,
That you have made the senses ache to follow:
Must we o'ertake Araxes on his road,
And have a warrior teach our council words?

Meres. Let us then wait the mighty hero's
coming:

Nor camp, nor cabinet exists without him.

Mit. Nor would himself exist, hadst thou thy
will!

King. What then, my lords! shall we defer
our wishes,

And wait the slow return of argument?

Queen. 'Twere worthy of your wisdom so to act:
Where is Araxes? whence is this alarm?

King. Where is Araxes? by the gods I swear,
I will decide e'en on the moment, queen!

Araxes executes his monarch's orders,
And hastens to the camp: so far, 'tis well:
Araxes may return, when Judah's vanquish'd:
What says my trusty, ever faithful Meres?

Meres. The great Araxes will, no doubt, re-
turn.

*Enter ARAXES.**Arax.* Behold him then !*King.* Is—is this a vision ? *Aside.**Meres.* Ha—can this be? and are we then
betray'd? *Aside.**Arax. (Aside)* As I suspected—dreadful ma-
niac fiend !*Or.* Now hear me, lords ! and Assur, listen
thou !

And thou, oh queen of mighty Babylon !

The wife of Ninus, mother of his son,
 That son bereft, dethron'd, but not destroy'd ;
 Attend the call th' avenging gods, through me,
 Their chosen organ, thunder in your ears :
 We meet in council to elect an heir,
 While Ninus lives and claims his rightful throne :
 We bend our voices to usurping Assur,
 While our heroic king, himself in arms,
 Such deeds achieves in fighting for his country,
 As did he boast no name but that he wears,
 Might of themselves outshine all ancestry,
 And undisputed win an alien throne :
 But, Babylon, rejoice ! rejoice, my country !
 Your patriot, your preserver is your king.

King. Seize, guards, the holy traitor ! and
that rebel,Greater in crime than fame ! away with them !
 Seize them, I say—what ! do you hesitate ?

Arax. My fellow-soldiers ! tried in battle's
peril,

Fighting with me, your king, I am no rebel :
But what name merits he the murd'rous fiend,
Who mocks you with the sacred name of duties,
Which so perform'd were black and two-fold
treason,

Ninus betray'd ! the wretch who slew him,
serv'd !

Monster ! this arm has not yet lost its vigor,
Though somewhat faint beneath a later blow !
Thou bloody tyrant ! now defend thyself !

*He approaches Assur—the guards surround the
throne and defend it.*

King. My guards, my faithful guards ! oh !
strike the traitor !

Far more than Kedar's plunder shall reward you.

Meres. Strike, strike the bold pretending re-
bel down.

Mit. Meres, you are my match : not great
enough

To vindicate the contest with a king :
If you are wearied with a peaceful life,
My sword will find employment for you, lord.

Sethar. Oh ! ye, who stand amaz'd at these
events,

Leading, I prophesy, to that great scene,
Where Ninus thron'd shall act his father's part

Before th' assembl'd and applauding world,
 Think you the proofs on which we act are
 doubtful ?

Were holy Oroes known most false and perjur'd,
 Could you believe not that his eyes beheld
 The tyrant from his brother's chamber steal,
 His hands encrimson'd with that brothea's blood,
 Or were my character, through lengthen'd years,
 Spun out with guilty deeds to infamy,
 Did our most solemn oaths betray our cause,
 Yet we can prove the murder of great Ninus,
 By signs to flash conviction through the land :
 Nor are the curs'd abettors of the act
 So swept by royal caution from the earth
 As at this day to give no evidence,
 Damning and most conclusive : Great Araxes,
 (Oh name thus join'd too humble for its bearer !)
 We trace by circumstances close, unbroken,
 From the dread wound that mark'd him for the
 grave,

(When the assassin paus'd at holy step
 Nor dar'd a second blow at innocence,)
 Through dangers horrible to infancy
 In the wild waste endur'd, to that bright day
 When all his father hung upon his arm,
 And shook the hostile towers of Kedar down :
 But speak, Semiramis—proclaim the truth :
 Assert our cause and sanction deep our proofs.

Mit. What proofs are wanting ? know we not
 our king ?

When round him glows the light of royalty,

And on his front shines full the patriot star ?

Queen. What says Araxes' self ? will he bend
humbly

And lay his claims submissive at our feet ?

Will he repose in confidence on us,

Nor own a wish that we refuse to bless ?

Will he acknowledge we alone can save him,

And give him empire to adorn his life ?

King. What would my queen ? I am her ab-
ject slave :

I bend before her—trembling at her will :

Arax. The son of mighty Ninus bow submis-
sive

Before his own hereditary throne ?

Never, oh queen ! and can't thou sit undaunted
Thron'd by his side who slew thy royal husband,
Whose station but the eyes of men invited

To shew the godlike hero in the field,

And in the senate all persuasive wisdom,

Whose rules, by others claim'd, support the state,
Still powerful to save through all the crimes

Of the fell murderer, thou now call'st thy hus-
band ?

The wretch who stabb'd my father in his sleep,
But now with later years more cautious grown,
Fixes a price on his descendant's life,

As here my fainting arm bears evidence,

Yet strong enough to grapple with the fiend !

How canst thou sit upon that blood-stain'd
throne,

And mark thy country hanging on thy lips,

Nor own its heir, thy son, the son of Ninus ?

Queen. Behold, my lords, by what he proves
his claims :

Is this the language of a son restor'd,
Am I his mother whom he thus accuses,
Where are the proofs the doating Sethar talks of
To balance contumelies thus in public ?
A filial voice would sink in soft affection,
A filial arm would first support a mother.

King. Now seize him, guards ! and seize that
hoary traitor,
And that opprobrious rebel, curs'd Mitrances,
And sacred Oroes—can his holy title
Protect the open preacher of rebellion
E'en in our council ? seize the daring villains.

*The guards surround SETHAR, MITRANCES, OROES,
and ARAXES.*

Mit. Shall we resist, my lord ?

Arax. Mitrances, no :

My body faints—my soul submits to fate :
These honest soldiers but perform their duty,
Obeying her who was the wife of Ninus :
My honor'd friends, the glorious prize is lost :
Oh ! my poor country torn ! I bleed with thee,
As from the grave, gifted with prophecy,
I mark unnumber'd ills brood o'er the land :
“ Son of the morning,”* thou shalt sink in
night,

And not a trace declare thou ever wast :
 Yet shall the heir of Ninus leave one lesson,
 One splendid gleam to illume his falling race,
 As like a king he teaches how to suffer :
 These are the proofs I now bequeath you,
 queen !

King. Away with him ! your queen commands obedience !

Throw him into the hungry lions' den :
 Those famish'd monsters will not share, I ween,
 The people's madness.

Arax. Oh ! not for myself
 Would I descend to ask a favor, Assur !
 But these, my friends !

King. Soldiers ! no more delay !
 Bear them away to prison and to death !

ARAXES and his friends are led off.

Queen. Almighty gods ! and is he then obey'd !
 Oh spare him ! spare ! recall the dread command :

He is—he is my son—son of great Ninus !
 Son of my murder'd husband, lord and life :
 He is your king : oh save him, cruel Assur !
 Nor thus exterminate a royal house :
 Add not the horror of a deeper crime
 To one so damning to your soul already :
 My husband, save my son ! what son ? what
 husband ?
 Gash'd with a thousand wounds, both son and
 husband

Low in the grave are laid : and see they point
To wounds all bleeding-fresh : and who shall
heal them ?

They have no mother, wife :

King. Follow him, Meres !

Be sure you place a crown upon his head !

He should die like a king ! this is his proof !

Exeunt King and Meres.

Queen. And I will follow to the lions' den :
E'en they will have more pity than fell Assur.

Exit.

The Scene closes.

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the Palace.*

KING and MERES.

King.

SO fall the enemies of mighty Assur !
 So sinks in earth this shewy, proud rebellion,
 Though fann'd by youthful hopes and female
 sighs,
 And now I trample on the prostrate phantom :
 Think'st thou, my Meres, that the shade of
 Ninus,
 Will welcome this pretending, weak avenger,
 Of crimes suppos'd to back his daring aims,
 And his aspiring efforts for a crown ?
 Howe'er, the stripling rebel play'd his part
 Not weakly or unsuitably.

Meres. His lessons

Sire, had been taught by masters in the art
 Of stubborn insurrectionary claims :
 Mitrances, Oroes, and the aged Sethar
 Have each contributed his stock of talent

To form the plot : through twenty years matur'd.

King. That fails at last ! the visionary fools !
 Them we'll reserve for our great triumph, Meres :
 But for Araxes, this great son of Ninus,
 This boyish king, this nephew to ourselves,
 Whom both my wife and fair Azema love !
 The gods preserve me from a jealous fit
 That ladies say turns the complexion yellow !
 To shun so great an evil, faithful Meres,
 We'll have his beauteous body so dispos'd of,
 That no artificer, your painter, sculptor,
 Shall ope the grave to take his picture there,
 And make the lifeless figure breathe again.

Meres. Doubtless your orders are obeying sire :
 In the most eastern quarter of the city,
 Hard by the river's bank, there is a den
 Where famish'd lions rage for food denied :
 If they should tremble at the son of Ninus,
 Oroes and Sethar must have talk'd to them :

King. My honest servant ! thou shalt have
 the princess,
 Aye and my crown ! but, truth ! 'twas wrong
 in you

To get such puny fellows to perform
 In our first scene.

Meres. And for that reason, sire,
 I have prepar'd some executioners
 That do not look upon the hand for rings.

King. You saw the rebel boy in prison, Meres,
 And gave our orders instantly to lead him
 To fill his mansion in his living tomb :

The royal brutes will roar outrageously
To feed upon the carcase of a king.

Meres. Yes, mighty sire ! and with my own
hands weav'd

A crown of wither'd leaves to adorn his brow :
Should your high majesty incline to see
The humble reverence the brutes will pay him,
There is a place beyond the reach of danger,
My gracious king may occupy !

King. Be it so !

Now dwell a moment on to-morrow's splendor :
No wither'd leaves must hang upon my fore-
head,

But studded thick with added jewels, *Meres*,
I'll shew the crown of Ninus stedfast there :
Twelve captive gods* will lead the long proces-
sion :

They did not save the people who ador'd them :
No wonder, they preferr'd a nobler worship
In the great capital, where Assur reigns :
Then follow kings who once had power, *Meres*,
Till we proclaim'd that power should not be :
Then mighty leaders and renowned captains :
Not far from these, surrounded by our guards,
With martial strains taught under Kedar's walls,
Storming the skies with grateful violence,
Assur himself in glorious car enthron'd,
'Mid splendors that shall mock the firmament,

* It was the practice, in the early ages of the Assyrian empire, to lead in triumph the idols of vanquished nations.

When mortals gaze and tremble at the glory !
 You smile, my Meres, now what happy thought
 Has cross'd thy mind, as rapidly it follows
 Thy monarch in his pride ?

Meres. Pardon me, sire !

Yet 'twere a thought that will intrude itself.

King. Give it me quick: for ever Meres'
 thoughts

Are worthy of himself and of his king.

Meres. Just as my gracious master's elo-
 quence

Brought his great self before my dazzl'd eyes,
 I could not but feel merry at the thought
 Of Sethar, Oroes, and the bold Mitrances
 Weeping with vulgar captives in the rear.

King. Well thought, Meres: there shall they
 walk,

The instruments of torture in their hands,
 That at the close of the immortal day
 Shall make each art'ry start successive out,
 'Till they discover who it is that reigns :
 Our queen shall sit beside us in our car :
 Haply she'll mourn a little for Araxes :
 A glist'ning tear will make her look more lovely,
 And soften down our triumph's brilliancy,
 That else would flash intolerable light :*
 But who, my Meres, think you shall attend
 In one car with her—aye—it shall be so :

* "And flash'd around intolerable day."—Dryden's *Pal. and Arc.*

Azema, worship't, as the future queen ?

Enter AZEMA.

And by the gods she now shall know our pleasure.

Az. Oh, mighty Assur ! see me prostrate fall
Low at your feet : who ne'er before presum'd
To question your dread will e'en to herself :
If ever from my infancy 'till now
This dreadful moment I were bless'd with
power,

To inspire one soft affection in your breast,
If mid the pressure of imperial cares
One single instant I have sooth'd your spirit,
Oh ! have compassion on my suff'ring heart,
And grant Azema's first and only suit.

King. Yes—you shall find, we love Azema
well :

A crown suspended lightly o'er thee hangs ;
Soon shall the glorious circle be your own,
And a right noble lord shall hold it firm :
But first that you may learn the royal duties,
Which oft, alas ! are painful to the feelings,
You must enquire how lord Araxes died,
And mark his friends prolong to-morrow's triumph :

Meres—think'st thou, the hour is now arriv'd
For us to take our station as thou wishest :

Az. Yet hear me, Assur, hear !

Enter MESSENGER.

Mes. Most mighty king !
 The guards that watch Araxes in the prison
 Refuse obedience to your royal orders,
 And will not let their prisoner come forth.

King. Thou cursed slave ! yet should it be so,
 Meres,

If thou should'st find this wretch's story true,
 Offer Araxes life and so far pardon
 As may consist with Exile. *Exit Meres.*

Now, Azema,
 For well I guess the prayer you had to offer,
 You see how near you touch our kingly state,
 In praying for Araxes : we must send you
 Our fair embassadress on equal terms
 To treat with him who bargains for our crown :

Az. Where shall Azema turn for solace, now ?

Enter ZAPHAN.

King. Zaphan what now ? you look as pale
 and wan
 As you had cross'd a spectre in your path.

Zaph. It was no spectre, but a sight more
 dreadful :

Semiramis, our queen, the wife of Assur,
 Her dignity betray'd, her sex forgotten,
 All dress, all form, all royalty neglected,

Her hair dishevell'd floating on the wind,
 With burning eyes now fix'd upon the skies,
 Now piercing quick through ev'ry one she
 meets,

Her arms in wild despair thrown to and fro,
 Her figure form'd for majesty and grace,
 Under the mighty passion that defies
 All majesty and grace, now awful grown :
 Like some great prophetess, by heav'n inspir'd,
 Sent on the earth to warn us of our doom,
 Exclaiming loud, Araxes is her son,
 Son of great Ninus, king of Babylon,
 Thus does the royal wanderer rage along
 Through all the city :

King. And the people, Zaphan ?

Zaph. Confus'd, astounded, they press round
 her, sire,

But all at awful distance and in silence.

Once as she paus'd with agitated step,
 A mother with her infant at her breast,
 She singl'd from the croud, bent o'er the babe,
 And kiss'd it, sobbing as her soul would leave her :
 A moment then their awe-struck feelings
 vanish'd,

And tears and groans promiscuous broke their
 way.

King. Where shall I fly the fury of the
 people ?

You, Zaphan ! haste to Lord Araxes' prison :
 Make the best terms, my friend, you can for
 Assur.

Say at my death he shall possess the crown,
And now be treated as the kingdom's heir.

Enter MESSENGER.

Thou, thou! what fresh damnation bringest thou?

Mess. Dread sire! but now, a bow-shot from the palace,

A furious mob proclaim Araxes king.

Even your guards refuse resistance to them,
And joining with the people cry Araxes.

King. The danger presses: I will to the temple:

They will not stain with blood the sanctuary:

And you, Azema, fly to your Araxes:

You could petition for the rebel's life,

Now save your monarch from the rebel's anger:

I cherish'd you for glory and a kingdom;

Wait till the noble prize maturely falls:

(To Messengers) Set Sethar, Oroes, and Mitrane free,

And let the people understand our pleasure.

Haste, haste, Azema—save your guardian king,
I'll to the temple—haste away—away!

Exeunt.

SCENE II.—*A Prison—ARAXES alone.*

Araxes. Oh had I perish'd mid my fellow-soldiers,

When, with triumphant roar, the torrent rush'd
 Through Kedar's breach, and whelm'd our coun-
 try's foes !

Why met I not my fate with that day's heroes,
 Who fell anticipating fame immortal,
 The glorious meed that crowns the warrior's
 sigh

Breath'd out with smiles in well-contested fields.
 Haply hereafter when some vet'ran friend
 Had fondly dwelt upon the mighty deeds,
 That fix'd the hesitating balance our's,
 Nine toiling years upheld in dread suspense,
 My name had stood not last upon the record,
 Not last have been propos'd as an example,
 Not last have glisten'd in the brave man's
 tear :

And had he thought upon my royal race,
 Acknowledg'd then, the murd'rous Assur dead,
 The partial hero might have own'd his friend
 Worthy to sit upon his father's throne :
 Oh, throne, for ever lost ! with slaughter stain'd !
 Oh, race ! for crimes unheard cut off in justice !
 Oh father unaveng'd, thy murd'rer thron'd !
 Now sinks the last, all forfeits unredeem'd,
 All glory clouded in a felon's doom !
 And you, my honor'd friends, for me consign'd
 To glut fell Assur's cruelty and rage,
 Whose sacred characters and hoary hairs,
 And valiant souls (if so the gods had granted !)
 Had sav'd, adorn'd and sanctified my throne,
 These tears are all the son of Ninus pays.

Enter MERES, attended by a guard.

Guard. A messenger, my lord, from royal Assur!

Meres. Is thus the will of our great king obey'd?

Possessing still his sword, and titles given
As if he held a court here in his prison?

The tale was not exaggerated truly! (*half aside.*)

Arax. If you are come, my lord, to speed
my doom,

Delay not the command the tyrant gave you:
I am prepar'd:

Meres. To change the name of tyrant,
When you shall hear the pleasure of our king.

Arax. Let me entreat you to be brief, my
lord,

And shun disputes that we shall never settle:
Tyrant or king! what does your master say?

Meres. He has commission'd me to offer life
And pardon for your traitorous attempt
To seize his throne:

Arax. Will he resign that throne
Or trust it to the vigour of his sword?
The glorious prize before th' assembl'd people
Set in the midst, while arm to arm we combat
And call the god of battles to decide.

Meres. The king would have to play at fear-
ful odds,

A diadem against a life proscrib'd:
But on condition you are banish'd hence,

The gracious monarch grants you life and freedom.

Arax. I spurn the gift and hate the giver, lord :

Assur and Ninus cannot live together :
Believe me, when I claim'd my rightful throne,
I knew the sole alternative was death :
The day is Assur's : were it mine, go tell him,
I had not sent a pardon to the traitor.

Meres. Is this your answer to my gracious message ?

Arax. This is the answer of insulted Ninus,
Who hop'd to find one solitary moment,
Deep in his prison, waiting for his doom,
Safe from the taunts of fell usurping Assur :
But as he seeks communication here,
Speak the request, that he forgives my friends.

Enter ZAPHAN.

Zaph. I come ambassador from our great king,

(For sure that name the lord Araxes owns)
Prepar'd to offer you a distant rule
O'er states that shall indemnify the loss
Of visionary hopes, and claims unreal,
Should you surrender, by a public act,
Your most unjust pretensions :

Arax. Hear me, lords !

I know not what designs your master forms

In sending you on errands such as these :
 Whether to shew his power by his insults,
 Or that he trembles at the people's wrath,
 When my undoubted birth shall be explain'd,
 And when the means, by which he won his
 crown,

Shall stand expos'd before the public eye,
 Or that reflecting on a brother's murder,
 Suitably follow'd by attempts twice made
 To plunge th' assassin's dagger in his son,
 (Nay, start not, lords) th' accursed tyrant feels
 There's blood enough upon his soul already !
 But this remember ; by these offers made
 He has acknowledg'd me no vulgar claimant,
 No low-born challenger to combat with him ;
 Assur himself confirms my mighty race,
 And sanctions deep the rights he would betray.

Zaph. (*to Meres*) The people are in arms :
 There's no resource.

Meres. (*To Zaph.*) What new proposals can
 you make for Assur ?

Zaph. My lord, the king, still anxious to pre-
 serve

A life his people honor with their love,
 Consents that you be nam'd his kingdom's heir,
 Successor to his crown, by marriage sanction'd,
 Treated as such with princely dignity,
 And compromising thus demands a peace.

Arax. Peace with his king ? whose throne
 usurp'd he fills,

Whose murder'd father cries in vain for vengeance ?

Peace with his king ? who now in prison plung'd,
 Hourly awaits a death of ignominy ?
 Great Babylon is mine : the east is mine :
 Nor from the death of Ninus interpos'd
 One moment when his son was not a king :
 My rights depend not upon mortal will,
 Mid heav'nly records they eternal stand,
 To ev'ry fibre of my heart they hold,
 Nor can the hungry lion tear them thence.

Enter AZEMA.

Az. Oh ! by whatever name I now must call you,

Araxes, Ninus, subject to great Assur,
 Or king who hurls a rival from his throne,
 See at your feet a suppliant princess kneel,
 Or if that name you now refuse Azema,
 Accept her prayer, to whom you offer'd once
 The vows of ardent love, receiv'd with rapture ;
 Oh suffer Assur still to wear his crown,
 Yourself acknowledg'd as his rightful heir,
 The princess yours—and oh ! with how much
 pride !

The people yours ! anticipating homage !

Araz. I did not think amid the loss of empire,
 Or the deep ruin of my gallant friends,

Or the reflexions that my father fell
 By the usurper's sword, still held in triumph,
 But to have met my death in dignity,
 By suff'ring still unbroken, undismay'd :
 But you, Azema, whom I e'er ador'd,
 As the bright model of celestial virtue,
 Whose smiles, (I dar'd not hope a brighter meed)
 Were the reward my fondest fancy gave
 To warlike deeds amid the roar of battle,
 Whose tears to me appear'd the noblest prize,
 Falling in glory I could seek to win,
 That you should follow my deep woes with insult,
 Bends me to earth and humbles all my pride.

Az. The people are your own : and Assur
 yields:

Arax. My lords ! you have my answer : why
 delay ?

Meres. You spurn our offers : name your own,
 my lord !

Explain your wishes in their full extent :
 Our royal master you will find prepar'd
 To grant you all conditions you demand.

Arax. Then bid him meet me near the tomb
 of Ninus,

And arm to arm fight for the diadem.

Zaph. Your power confess'd ! shew it in mer-
 cy, lord !

Arax. In mercy to mankind, but not to Assur.

Az. Mercy to me ! forgive him for my sake !

Enter MITRANES.

Mit. Oh, royal Ninus! we have won the day :
 Your friends are free : your prison doors are open :
 The queen's voice has been heard through all
 the city,

And every heart acknowledges her son :
 The people bellow for their king restor'd :
 Fell Assur flies for refuge in the temple.

Arax. The temple say you ? heav'nly powers,
 I thank you !

The holy place befits the sacrifice :
 The gods themselves conduct my arm to ven-
 geance.

Az. Yet hear, Araxes, hear !

Arax. I must not hear ! *Exit.*

Az. Oh lead me, lords ! where I may still
 implore,

Or check the hand uprais'd for act of blood.

Zaph. As easy 'twere t' arrest the bolt of heav'n !
 Meres ! we'll follow to proclaim him king :
 And win court favor by our zeal for him
 Whoe'er he be, that reigns in Babylon : *Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*The Temple.*

The KING, alone.

King. Where, and what am I ? ghastly spec-
 tres glare,

And ev'ry avenue is full of horrors :
 From every pillar armed enemies
 Or forms more dreadful, aim the deadly point,
 And with loud yell proclaim the damning sen-
 tence :
 One shape there is, crown'd like a king, and
 sceptr'd,
 Yet gash'd with gory wounds, now bleeding fresh,
 E'en at this moment on the altar standing,
 Deriding prayer, mocking at penitence :
 I must not pray : a people's curses hang
 Upon my sighs, and weigh my aspirations down :
 Where is Araxes? son of murder'd Ninus ?
 With sword of flame, just seen above the crowd,
 The spectre-form above pointing the way,
 Hark ! irresistibly th' avenger comes,
 And not a single arm wards off the blow. *Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*The Temple—the Tomb of Ninus.*

Enter KING.

King. Where shall I fly ? ah ! why attempt to
 fly ?
 I cannot shun myself nor that dread form :
 These are the tortures of a murderer's soul.

Enter ARAXES.

Arax. Turn, monster, turn ! thy hour is come at last.

Stern retribution hangs upon my sword.

King. Son of great Ninus ! I'll not fight with thee !

Arax. Then yield and be my slave and prisoner !

Thou shalt be fetter'd for the public gaze,
The people's scorn, the mockery of nations ;
Coward, assassin, traitor, fratricide,
Stain'd with all crimes that can be done in safety !
Or I will drag thee to that sacred tomb
Thou now insultest with unholy presence,
Be it not, the great gods conduct thee here
To shed thy blood in expiation, Assur !
And where thy royal brother lies in death,
With filial arm complete my destiny.

King. Give me a moment to consult on terms.

Arax. Terms, thou dread tyrant, from the son of him

Who, by thee murder'd, heard propos'd no terms ?

The monarch slept and could not hear of terms !
I challenge thee to fight, is not that mercy ?
Dastard ! canst thou be daring but in crime ?
Thou hadst no trembling when thy brother bled,
Save that thy step might wake him ere the blow ;
Thou hadst no trembling when thou woo'dst his wife ;

A murder'd brother, a dishonor'd sister,
 Incest and fratricide inspir'd no fears :
 Thy sceptre's weight has bruis'd a suff'ring
 people,

And bloody cruelty has thinn'd the land :
 Draw then thy sword, and be as fearless now.

King. Come on then, Ninus, I did slay thy
 father :

One effort more may give thee to thy sire.

They fight—Araxes wounds him—Assur falls:
Arax. Down; down to hell ! Ninus, thou art
 aveng'd ! *Assur dies.*

Enter OROES—SETHAR—MITRANES—AZEMA.

Arax. My honor'd friends, see where the ty-
 rant lies,

E'en at the base of royal Ninus' tomb
 Yielding his cursed life :

Or. All-glorious king,

These are the times when high dispensing heav'n
 With hand all palpable records it's lessons
 Deep on the hearts of men ! Semiramis
 Torn with conflicting passions, fear, remorse,
 Supposing still her son fell Assur's victim,
 Her sense obscur'd, refusing to admit
 The cheering hope, that you had gain'd your
 throne,

Worn with exertions passing human strength, .
 In her last sigh, still calling on her son,
 Fainting, exhausted, sinks in night eternal.

Arax. Spirit of Ninus ! bless her and receive
her !

Be all her errors buried in the grave,
Her virtues star-like spot the firmament !
It was her bounty that sustain'd my youth,
It was her favor that conferr'd on me
A soldier's meed in an ennobl'd name,
Her mercy temper'd Assur's cruelty
And sav'd my people many dire alarms,
Her frailties were the frailties of her sex,
Her mind and manners well became a queen,
Her dying voice plac'd Ninus on his throne :
To my great father shall she be consign'd,
With obsequies befitting her descent,
And shall her son lead on the mourning band !
With step of heartfelt woe, with grateful tears.

Mit. And now, most honor'd king, the day
prepar'd

By tyrant Assur for his mighty triumph,
But little chang'd shall hail you sovereign lord !
Ye gods ! how rich the people's joy will make it,
Not forc'd by terror, nor by art allur'd,
Flash'd from all eyes, and bursting from all
hearts !

Arax. Fear not, Azema ! there shall be no
triumph :

Ever equivocal ! it may degrade
The best earn'd conquest in the noblest cause,
Celestial justice turn to vulgar passion,
And in the eye of moral contemplation,
Level the glorious victor with his foe :

Let other conquerors lengthen out their trains
 With weeping captives, and with prostrate kings,
 While the loud chorus swells the stately hymn,
 Insulting heav'n with gorgeous blasphemies :
 I fought for honor and a father's death,
 I fought for empire and my people's rights ;
 Those rights to me by just inheritance,
 As their protector, or if lost, restorer,
 From the beginning of created things,
 What time our mighty fathers high uprear'd
 On rich Euphrates' bank their eldest throne,
 Thro' heroes and thro' demigods come down :
 To have acted justly be my great reward !
 This for the past : be it my future hope
 To imitate the prince I have aveng'd,
 To rule like him, and win my people's love !

F I N I S.

NOTE.

For this line I am indebted to the celebrated message of Sennacherib the Assyrian monarch, to Hezekiah, king of Judah, as recorded in the 18th chapter of the second book of Kings, and afterwards more fully in the 19th. The date of this transaction in the usual editions of the Bible is 710 years before Christ. “Where are the Gods of Hamath or of Arpad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, or Ivah? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand?” I do not mean by taking a part of this passage to fix upon its date as the time of my play, and perhaps, if I had such an intention, I should be guilty of an anachronism in representing the capture of Kedar at the same æra. It would have been easy indeed to have avoided this imputation, by selecting one of the towns mentioned in the message as the scene of my hero’s exploits. Hena or Ivah would have answered my purpose, and the crimes I have supposed would have suited the court of Sennacherib. Neither am I far from the manner of his death. “*When he was come into the house of his God, they, that came forth from his own bowels, slew him there with the sword.*” But it will be said that Sennacherib was king of Nineveh, not of Babylon. I have been always perplexed upon the choice of the capital of the Assyrian empire. Undoubtedly the general opinion, founded probably on the splendid descriptions and allusions of the sacred writers, is in favor of Babylon, but we must recollect that, geographically, Nineveh seems to have been the capital of Assyria, properly so called, nor, according to Herodotus did Babylon become the royal residence till after it’s destruction. In opposition also to the complimentary illustrations of the Jewish prophets may be placed the following historical relation. “Behold the land of the Chaldeans: the people was not, till the Assyrian founded it for them that dwelt in the wilderness: they set up the towers thereof: they raised up the palaces thereof:” Isaiah, ch. 23. v.

13. Moreover, the Babylonians are perpetually confounded with the Assyrians, and buried in that general name. In the prophecy that describes the triumph of the Jews over Babylon, we find, "I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot." Isaiah, ch. 14. v. 25. Yet if the general opinion is erroneous on the superiority of Babylon, and if this celebrated city was merely an appendage to the Assyrian empire, how comes it that the sovereigns of Nineveh and Babylon are so often spoken of in the sacred writings as acting separately. At the very time that Sennacherib sent his blasphemous and defying message to Jerusalem, Merodoch-Baladan, the king of Babylon, we are told, was pursuing a policy precisely the reverse. While the former was openly insulting them, the other was deceiving them by flattery and presents. Besides, if one of these sovereigns had been subordinate to the other, he probably would have bore an inferior title. It must be observed too, that if Babylon had really been no more than a change of residence for the Assyrian monarch, and known to be built as such, its inhabitants would scarcely have ventured to make those high pretensions to antiquity, for which they were in all ages remarkable. Cicero derides them in his day for their ignorance and vanity "in affirming that their records take in four hundred and seventy thousand years." (See Bayle's notes to the art. Babylon,) Voltaire on the other hand defends in some measure the antiquity of Babylon, on the ground, that in the time of Aristotle, astronomical observations of nineteen hundred and three years were found there, observations, which in all probability were not commenced till the Babylonians were already a considerable people. (Dict. phil. art. Babel.) Nineveh, as the name indeed indicates, is said to have been built by Ninus, King of Assyria. Babylon had also several memorials of the same monarch, such as the Ninian gate, of which mention is often made in Herodotus. As there is so much real confusion in a tragedy which does not exact extreme accuracy, I may be permitted to lay my scene in whichever city is most adapted to

verse, and certainly, though many doubts may prevail on other points, there can be none on this. In the same manner I would rather countenance a transient idea, that a town called Kedar was taken at the period alluded to, than aim at the praise of accuracy in dates, by perpetually introducing into my verses the inharmonious words of Hena or Ivah. The reader will perceive that I have taken my persons almost entirely from Voltaire's Semiramis. When I first formed my plan I intended to adopt such names for the Babylonian princes and nobles, as I should find to have really belonged to them. If, however, a modern historian of some celebrity could lament over the necessity of introducing into his recital certain Indian princes, if he could feel such alarm at the liquid appellation of Sujah-ul-dowlah, as to think a prose narration deformed by it, what would have been his horror and consternation, if in writing a tragedy, and laying his scene in the Babylonish court, he had fallen upon the third verse of the 39th chapter of Jeremiah. "And all the princes of the king of Babylon came in and sat in the middle gate, even Nergal-sharezer, Samgar-nebo, Sarsechim, Rab-saris, Nergal-sharezer, (this last name seems to have been a peculiar favorite) Rabmag, with all the residue of the princes of the king of Babylon." I am sure the historian of the Brunswick family will sympathize with the feelings, under the influence of which I took refuge in the established authority of Voltaire. With regard to the name of Semiramis, it must be considered as a general one for any *Queen of Babylon*. "What credit," says Mr. Bryant, "can be given to the history of a person, the time of whose life cannot be ascertained within 1583 years?" In a subsequent note to Beloe's translation of Herodotus, he remarks, "that Semiramis was an emblem, and the name was a compound of Sama-ramas or ramis: it signified the divine token, the type of providence: and as a military ensign it may with some latitude be interpreted, the standard of the most high.

ERRATA. VOL. I.

- Page 9, line 7, from the top, for *father* read *lordship*.
35, line 3, from the bottom, before *that* insert *I continued*.
261, line 8, from the top, for *sciences* read *science*.
~~268~~, line 14, from the bottom, for *western* read *eastern*.
268, line 13, from the bottom, for *descending* read *ascending*.
284, line 4, from the top, for *are* read *as*.
285, line 2, from the top, for *cause* read *course*.
285, line 10, from the bottom, erase *the* before *opinion*.
553, line 8, from the bottom, for *victim* read *heifer*.
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ERRATA. VOL. II.

- Page 128, line 12, from the top, read "shall yield a dawn that brightens into day."
143, line 3, from the bottom, insert *eye* after *public*.

